SPORTS / A24

Pacquiao-Marquez II
slated March 15
in Las Vegas

NEWS / A4

Subic antismuggling
chief (ret.) Lt. Gen.
Jose Calimlim dies; 62

WORLD / A21

Teen accused of hacking 1.3M
computers, skimming millions
arrested in New Zealand

SATURDAY SPECIAL / L1

Neil Diamond confesses
Caroline Kennedy inspired
his hit song, 'Sweet Caroline'

Cameraman arrested not once, but twice

By Julie M. Aurelio

AS IF COVERING THE Magdalo soldiers' standoff in a five-star hotel and then being hauled off to Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City weren't enough,

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, December 1, 2007 44 15 sections Vol. 22 / No. 256 P18 www.inquirer.net

Trillanes offers to pay for damage to the Pen

By Gil C. Cabacungan, Nancy Carvajal, DJ Yap and Christine Avendaño

"THE FAMED WATERFALLS CONTINUE TO cascade down the tiered facade of the Peninsula Hotel in Makati City as if to calm jitters from last Thursday's standoff involving the group led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

THE TEMPER OF THE TIMES. Militant groups assemble at the Liwasang Bonifacio on Friday to mark the 144th birth anniversary of Katipunan founder Andres Bonifacio. At the same time it's a protest rally against a "morally bankrupt government" and to demand for the resignation of President Arroyo. (Story on Page A2)

Razon: Plot still active

Rebellion charges set; 'shock' tactic defended

By Christine O. Avendaño, Alexis Romero and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police defended the use of armored personnel carriers against the rebel occupants of the Manila Peninsula hotel during part of its "shock" strategy to force them to surrender, even as prosecutors last night began inquest proceedings on possible rebellion charges against them.

Director General Avelino Razon said if the 1980's Special Action Force (SAF) and APCs were to stay out of the hotel lobby and to shock the group led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

"That was part of the strategy," he said, adding that the less lethal means fired by the APCs were not targeted at anyone and were merely "persuasive fire."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he had assigned a team of 10 Department of Justice prosecutors to oversee the

NEWS, A4-A6, A8

Journalists cracked jokes as they waited for attack

By Julie M. Aurelio, Gil Cabacungan Jr. and DJ Yap

ABOUT 50 JOURNALISTS AND cameramen were inside the besieged Manila Peninsula on Thursday when government forces, although they were not the primary target of the 3 p.m. ultimatum, launched an assault to flush out Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and his renegade band.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

There are fragments and snapshots from that gruesome encounter with what has become known in military parlance as "shock and awe"—a swift current inside a luxury hotel.

AT AROUND 4:30 P.M., WORD went around that the assault

JOURNALISTS, A11

PICKING UP THE PIECES. The Peninsula is hard at work restoring its lobby lobby. Despite major repair work the lobby glass door destroyed by an armored Personnel Carrier, the 5-star hotel will open on Monday at 3 p.m.

Manhunt on for 4 Magdalo officers

By Alexis Romero and Nikko Dizon

POLICE AND THE MILITARY YESTERDAY launched a hunt for renegade Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon and at least three other officers—including one seen wearing a wig—following their abortive takeover of the Manila Peninsula hotel.

Officials said a captured detainee detailed a plan by four groups to seize control of the hotel and that they were looking into the possibility that politicians might be involved.

Philippine National Police (PNP) Director General Avelino Razon told reporters that the plot to destabilize the government "was still active."

Razon also said Faeldon could have slipped out of the hotel by posing as a member of media.

Razon said one of the four officers of the dissident Magdalo group the police were hunting for was seen wearing a black camouflage uniform and a wig.

"If you review video clips, there was an officer who was wearing black uniform [and] Lieutenant Colonel Lim was reading his prepared statement in uniform. He has long hair, (but it turned out) he was wearing a wig," Razon said.

He said he considered Faeldon to be "trained and dangerous."

NATION, A10

What was Trillanes thinking?

By Christian V. Esguerra and Artyn dela Cruz

WHAT WAS SEN. ANTONIO Trillanes really up to?

Like accused coupists who nothing to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo are so a ban on whether Thursday's Manila Peninsula siege led by the ex-Navy officer was part of a wider conspiracy or simply one man's "spontaneous combustion."

Former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman of the Black and White Movement, ex-Ambassador Roy Señerez and actor Bot Centeno yesterday said they were caught by surprise when Trillanes' and

WHAT WAS, A6

MEDIA ARRESTS

ABS-CBN plans to sue; PNP readies countersuit

By Jerome Aning and Alexis Pope

OFFICIALS OF ABS-CBN YESterday coordinated the arrest of members of the media in the aftermath of the Thursday standoff at the Manila Peninsula, and said the network was studying the possibility of filing charges against the law enforcers involved.

But if push comes to shove, the Philippine National Police may respond with a suit of its own, according to PNP Director General Avelino Razon Jr. He said in an interview that he hoped things would not come to such a pass.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent, nonprofit organization that works to safeguard press freedom worldwide, yesterday said: "This use of

ABS-CBN, A10

Trying to make sense out of it all

By Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

BY THE TIME THIS PIECE comes out in print everything that can be said about the Manila Peninsula event, value or caution, will perhaps already have been said. Nevertheless let me try my hand at outlining some points of the aspects of it.

COMMENTARY

First of all, why did Senator Trillanes and his crew do it? A criminal act was committed, but I will leave the labelling of the act to the government's army of lawyers. The obvious answer to my question, announced by both Trillanes and Gen. Danilo Lim, was that their objective was to bring the administration of President Gloria Macapagal down. Immediately or in the distant future?

If immediate success was the objective, were they dreaming of a repeat of John L. which ousted President Marcos, or of

TRYING, A13

'Reming' survivor pins hopes on 4 photographs

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Tina Arceo-Dumlao

WITH DWINDLING FOOD (LESHEW AND a flimsy shelter still serving as home for her and her two sons, the tragic shelter from Guinobatan, Albay is pinning her hopes on four personal photographs.

Lily Samson's treasures are actually sad souvenirs of Supertyphoon "Reming," which pounded Albay a year ago yesterday—wiping whole villages off the map and killing 714 people, including her mother, brother and 28 of her other kin.

The snapshots, the said, were taken by a photographer friend of hers during President Macapagal-Arroyo's post-typhoon visit on Dec. 1 in Guinobatan, one of the hardest hit areas.

She has hung on to the photographs since then, convinced that they would someday serve as solid evidence of the President's promise.

One shows an injured Samson showing Gloria de Mauricia, the President's wife, the wounds that vanished from the same page of floodwaters, bonfires and mud unleashed by Reming from the slopes of Mt. Mayon.

Another is of a cemeterian hovering

REMING, A12

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ3 FOUR DIGIT

3 10 2 2 6 7

SUBTRES

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MEGALOTTO 6/45

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Bishops' rally fizzles out

A PROTEST ACTION calling for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation was relocated, dispersed, and eventually fizzled out—with none of the three bishops who were to lead it showing up.

A number of people showed up at Plaza Miranda yesterday, but they were the usual Friday crowd that gathers there either to savor the wet market or to pray at the Quiapo church.

The anti-Arroyo protest action scheduled for 2 p.m. at Plaza Miranda did not push through.

The Bayanang Makabayang Hanayanga (BMH), which was supposed to march from the University of Santo Tomas to Plaza Miranda, cut short its march and relocated to Morayta.

One of the BMH protesters, who requested anonymity, said the BMH decided to link up with protesters from the Akbayan group in front of the Far Eastern University on Morayta as only a handful showed up for their march and rally.

Another group of about 3,000 protesters under the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) gathered at the Liwasang Bonifacio to mark the 144th birth anniversary of revolutionary hero Andres Bonifacio and protest what it called a "morally bankrupt government."

Members of Bayan, Bayan Muna party-list group and allied groups distanced themselves from the abortive coup in Makati on Thursday but condemned the allegedly excessive force used to suppress it.

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, who led the protesters, compared the Arroyo administration to the Spanish officials who oppressed the Filipinos.

"We're now facing a return of the rule of the Spanish colonial government, its excesses, the corruption, the human rights violations," he said in an interview.

After a brief program, the protesters decided to march toward Mendiola, cutting through the Ramon and Sisto avenues, causing traffic jams.

Those who participated included Ocampo, Gabriela party-list Rep. Liza Maza, Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran, Bayan chair Carol Araullo, leaders of other allied groups, former transportation and communications secretary Joseito Lichauco and Linggayan Arroyo.

The group was met near the scene of Mendiola by Police Supt. Nicanor Tan and told they could go no further. They agreed to hold a program atop a flatbed truck, watched by a group of about 100 riot policemen. The protesters dispersed peacefully at about 5 p.m.

The three bishops—Novaliches Bishop Antonio Tobias, Infanta (Quezon) Bishop Emerlito Julio Labayen, and Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez—never showed up at Plaza Miranda.

Labayen was being held by police for his participation in the Thursday stand-off in Makati, and was only released yesterday afternoon, while no reason was given for Tobias' absence.

Iñiguez was supposed to be coming from another engagement in Olongapo, but arrived too late to catch anything.

"None of the bishops were able to attend the rally," said Iñiguez.

Even KMU president Jaime Respeticio was a no-show at the scheduled protest action and could not be reached for comment. — Beverly T. Hattenstone

HONORING BONIFACIO

Tarlac President Manny Villar is welcomed by Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim during the celebration of the 144th birthday of Andres Bonifacio at the Bonifacio Shrine in Manila. Villar was the guest of honor and speaker during the celebration. EDDIE VILLANUEVA

Aboitiz not in Transco bidding

THE ABOITIZ GROUP YESTERDAY said it has no interest in any of the consortia bidding for the assets of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

"We are very aware of the restrictions by law prohibiting electricity distribution and generation companies like (Aboitiz Power) from any ownership in the transmission sector and we will abide by the restriction," a spokesperson from Aboitiz Power confirmed.

He added that "the present leadership of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) should be commended for pursuing the privatization mandate by government with vigor and resolve. Investors are finally convinced that targets are for the privatization of power assets will be met and have been bidding record prices for the assets sold. Bidders are also very satisfied that the bidding process has been fair and very transparent."

"The result of PSALM's success is for the power industry to move closer to the open access thresholds set by law which is a priority set by government. We therefore believe the efforts of PSALM should be supported, and not derailed."

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **ANOTHER** Batasan blast victim dies /A5

■ **GMA OFF** to Europe tonight /A7

Palawan leaders agree on Malampaya sharing

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—PALAWANO leaders and the province of Palawan have forged an agreement to split royalty payments to the Malampaya gas project Forum by the Supreme Court pending its ruling regarding the project's ownership, according to Palawan Governor Joel T. Reyes.

President Arroyo sealed the agreement with Palawan leaders in Malacañang on Wednesday during a meeting that included Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, who had earlier complained that the city had been left out in the initial negotiations and lobbied to block release of the royalty.

"We reached an agreement with the President to speed up the development of Palawan through the release of the disputed Malampaya money and also resolve the issue of the share of Puerto Princesa," Reyes said on Thursday.

Earlier reports indicated that the national government and Palawan would receive some P6 billion in royalty payments from Service Contract 38 or the Malampaya gas project.

The agreement provides for dividing the payments into three equal parts with the provincial government and the two municipal governments each getting a share.

Hagedorn blasted the initial agreement made last August, ostensibly because the deal excluded Puerto Princesa City, which had been a part of the 2nd district of Rep. Abraham Mitra before its reallocation as a highly urbanized city in July.

Under the Local Government Code, Puerto Princesa City being a highly urbanized city independent of the administrative control of the province, will no longer be entitled to a share of the province's internal revenue allotment due to a reduction in political jurisdiction.

Reyes confirmed an earlier report that President Arroyo had signed the executive order that formalized the Malampaya sharing scheme "but it was never released because of Mayor Hagedorn's protest."

A tortured round of negotiations initiated mainly by former Energy Secretary Rafael Lotilla reportedly bruised up the ambassador Puerto Princesa as a direct beneficiary of the funds, a source added.

Hagedorn had lobbied for a direct share for Puerto Princesa, claiming that the Malampaya reserves started lying before the city became independent and thus it deserved a retroactive share. Reddemptus Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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'Foster Child' wins in France

FILIPINO FILMMAKER ERIC QUIZON DIEDO's "Foster Child" earns the Prize for Fiction at the International Environmental Film Festival, beating entries from Australia, Spain, Austria, Iran and Turkey.

The environmental film festival was in Paris, France, from Nov. 21 to 27.

Mendoza, who attended the Cinemovie Film Festival in France, was already at the airport when he learned of his film's triumph.

"French distributor Ad Vitam's Emmelie (now informed) me [about winning] by calling me on my cell phone. I was just about to board [the plane then]," Mendoza told Cherie Gil-garcia via SMS.

Mendoza is scheduled to arrive in Manila today (Friday).

The film stars Cherry Pie Picache as a surrogate mother who takes care of abandoned or orphaned children for P1,000 a month in his early agreement program.

"It's a great honor," Mendoza said of his film's win in France.

It is the third international trophy for the film, according to Deadbe's manager Ed Instrella. It previously won the Best Actress award for Nombe at the Cinema Guelfan Film Festival in New Delhi and the Special Jury Prize at the Fantasia Film Festival in Bandelmon.

"More than the international recognition, for me, what is more important is that I'm happy with my work," Mendoza pointed out.

The film's producer, Bobbie Tan of Solita, echoed Mendoza's sentiments.

"These international recognitions inspire me to keep producing more significant films even if they are commercially unrewarding," Tan explained via SMS. "I feel so good that Filipino films are alive abroad whereas Philippine cinema is like a dead man walking in the country." Rayanti Sanchez

5 soldiers, 4 Moro rebs slain in Sulu clash

DATU MAMA SCITY—FIVE SOLDIERS AND four Moro rebels were killed while at least 15 others were wounded during separate clashes in Kalingalang Caluang, Sulu yesterday, according to military reports.

Maj. Gen. Nelson Allarga, Western Mindanao Command chief told the Inquirer soldiers of the 2nd Marine Brigade clashed with the combined forces of the Abu Sayyaf and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the villages of Dicaloang-punsilang and Kumbing early yesterday.

He said the first clash occurred in Kumbing pending around 7 a.m. when the Khaliani, who were conducting operations in a remote village, cleared upon the group of MNLF Commander Hidden Abdik.

Detained ranking officials

Abdik led the group which detained several ranking government and military officials earlier this year. Allarga said Abdik's group clashed with the 40th Infantry group in the area.

Allarga said that when Abdik's group encountered, the Marines followed them until they caught up with them in Kumbing Village.

Four persons were killed during the clashes, according to Col. Ernesto Alfanta, commander of the 2nd Marine Brigade based in Jolo.

Alfanta said the cadavers of the slain gunmen were recovered along with several high-powered firearms, medicines and camouflage uniforms.

He identified three of the slain MNLF gunmen as Commander Mashiba Bacnulla, Brother Abdulwahab, a close aide of Misuk, and Ibrahim Biba.

Alfanta said several MNLF and Abu Sayyaf gunmen were also injured in the clashes.

Alfanta said several MNLF and Abu Sayyaf gunmen were also injured in the clashes.

"Based on intelligence report Abdik and six others were also wounded," he said.

Intelligence report

"We suffered five dead and eight wounded but only one of the eight wounded soldiers suffered multiple gunshot wounds, the rest have slight injuries only," Alfanta said.

Alfanta said stepping up operations were being conducted in all ports now.

Meanwhile, combat-fled armed men reportedly attacked with rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) the 200[illegible] and 11 civilians, killing one person and wounding two others.

Col. Noel Coballes, commander of the Army's 104th Infantry Brigade based in Datu[illegible], identified the victim as Benjamin Egbo, manager of a coconut plantation owned by

Wounded were Zeljo Segnos, the truck driver and security escort Rosalie Crispo.

Coballes said investigations were still being conducted to determine the perpetrators and the motive behind the ambush.

Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

SC clears rich PW exec

By Lala B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS RE-versed an Ombudsman decision dismissing a public works official for unexplained wealth, saying the official's properties appear to have been properly acquired.

The tribunal also reversed the concurrent benefits of Salvador Reyes, a former undersecretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways, who served the government for 41 years.

But it found Reyes negligent for the inaccuracies in his statements of asset, liabilities and net worth (SALN) for 2002, and ordered the forfeiture of the equivalent of six months' pay, which is to be deducted from his retirement benefits.

The Philippine National Police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group filed an administrative complaint against Reyes, saying the assets of his and his family appeared to have been illegally acquired because their value was disproportionate to his salary.

The PNP also said that aside from having numerous properties, the Reyes family also took frequent trips abroad from 1993 to 2002, and that not all of the assets of Reyes's wife were declared.

Based on the police complaint, the Ombudsman dismissed Reyes from service for grave misconduct and dishonesty. Reyes appealed the decision with the Court of Appeals, and then the Supreme Court.

The high court issued a temporary restraining order against Reyes's dismissal while the petition was pending. Before the issue could be resolved, however, Reyes had retired from the service.

Not enough evidence

In its Nov. 23 decision, the high court said there was not enough evidence to support the complaint. And while it commended the efforts of the police and the Office of the Ombudsman to prosecute officials found to have amassed unexplained wealth, the high tribunal said it could not "circumstance unsubstantiated charges against a hapless public official just to send a message that the government is serious in its campaign against graft and corruption."

The PNP and the Ombudsman should do well to remember that "good intentions do not win cases; evidence does," the court said.

Accordingly, the high court, Reyes is not able to present clear records showing how he and his wife were able to acquire their assets through their businesses, and not just using his salary as a government official.

"In sum, this Court finds substantial evidence that petitioner and his wife have lawful sources of income other than petitioner's salary as a government official that enabled them to acquire several real properties in their names and travel abroad," it said.

As for the Reyes couple's 26 foreign trips abroad, the high court said these were made by less people in a span of nine years.

It said the frequency of foreign travel was by itself not proof of unexplained wealth. It was vital to show that such trips are beyond an official's financial capacity in light of his salary and other sources of income.

Gen. Calimlim, Subic antismuggling chief, dies; 62

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Retired Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim, the senior deputy administrator for operations of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, celebrated his 62nd birthday on Thursday in his hospital bed at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center.

"Apparently [Calimlim] just wanted the nurses to be happy as he threw a party for them while he was on his respirator," said Alex Illare, Calimlim's pub lic relations officer.

At 8:45 a.m. Friday, Calimlim died of multiple organ failure, said Allan, citing reports from the official's doctors.

He said Calimlim's remains would be taken to Camp Aguinaldo and to his hometown of Magandan, Pangasinan, this Monday for body viewing before cre mation in this freeport for a three day wake.

Arad her wake would be held in Camp Aguinaldo on Wednesday before Calimlim is buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani on Dec. 7.

Calimlim, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1968, was considered as one of the most powerful men at the ORAS on account of his past roles—former chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, former AFP vice chief of staff, erstwhile head of the anti-smuggling Task Force Salinas and chief of the anti-smuggling Task Force Subic.

Calimlim also served as commander of the Presidential Security Group.

Added Illare: Calimlim's illness...Illare said the official was hospitalized for "severe stress."

Allan did not confirm that Calimlim had fever centers and underwent surgery in China in June this year, reports that circulated in the freeport when he went on medical leave.

"His nerves's sure of that," Allan said. Norbert Joaquin, Inquirer Central Luzon

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MANILA PEN CAPER

Elsewhere, loyal gov't troops choked off support for Trillanes

By the Inquirer Bureaus

AS BLUE REBEL SOLDIERS WERE calling for "people power" to oust the Manila Peninsula siege, President Macapagal-Arroyo was quietly consolidating her forces—military, police and civilian—around the country to choke off support for the rebel group.

Thursday's siege led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim ended after the group failed to gain public support.

At its height, Maj. Gen. Rodrigo Maxiang, chief of the Northern Luzon Command, erected checkpoints on main roads in the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley Cordillera and Central Luzon.

"We are prepared for any eventuality," Maclang said from Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

He said the First Scout Ranger Regiment camp in Bulacan was under watch but there was "no report of unauthorized movements."

Lim was the former commander of the Scout Rangers who were involved in previous coup attempts.

Chief Supt. Ismael Pala, Regional Police chief, said checkpoints were set up at Dalton Pass in Cabanatuan City to stop the movements of forces "sympathetic" to Trillanes.

Movements of militant groups in Central Luzon were also monitored, police said.

In the 7th Infantry Division in Fort Magsaysay, soldiers were placed on standby for any request for government reinforcement from Metro Manila.

Maj. Gen. Hebbon Dibdib, commander of the 5th Infantry Division in Cagayan, for his part, said he was "ready to uphold and defend" the Constitution.

Nor east, Chief Supt. Ernesto Torrecampo, Cagayan Valley police director, ordered a "physical security enhancement" to check any troop movement.

In the Visayas, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, regional police director, said he was in the dark as to the exact location of Trillanes and his group but that "assuming his cause is righteous, there is no need to drag the country into a mess."

In Cagayan de Oro City, the League of Cities of the Philippines denounced the act of "destabilization" and said it is a statement: "The political course should only plunge our nation even more into economic instability."

At the Southern Luzon Command, the gate of Camp Nakar in Lucena was immediately closed.

After a hurried roll call, Army Col. Oscar Tabuga Jr., acting Scout chief of staff, told soldiers that Trillanes and his supporting officers should be kept left for the country's political leaders to resolve.

Some Bulacan officials said calls for soldiers to bring down Ms Arroyo had been going on since Tuesday.

"But those were no takers here," said one official who requested anonymity.

Police and Army operatives in Bicol teamed up to monitor any coup movements following intelligence reports that there were Magdalo members in San Fernando, Tigaon, and Naga City in Camarines Sur.

Police Senior Supt. Rolligi Agunsayos Tito said the group's "seditious conspiracy" in Bicol had failed.

'No Magdalos here'

At the Western Command in Puerto Princesa City, Western Commander Brigadier Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino said: "We are not at all affected in Palawan....Wala nang Magdalo supporter dito (There are no more Magdalo supporters here)."

Top police and military officials in the Visayas sought to allay public fears of another coup threat.

Central Command chief Maj. Gen. Nicanor Bolocon said a hourly check showed no reports of unions sympathetic to the Magdalo group.

Maj. Gen. Armando Gaoiran, commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division on Jolo, and Chief Supt. Alberto Caballesteros, Eastern Visayas regional police director, said everything was normal in the region.

Military and police unit commanders were also directed to reassess units of the Scout Ranger Regiment in Bohol and Negros Island.

Special forces

Supt. Nilo Donato, 19SF Southern Leyte provincial director, said his men watched the Lilian ferry terminal, the gateway to the south, "for possible movements coming Mindanao."

Col. Noel Caballero, commander of the 103th Army Brigade handling the special forces in Basilan, said the Basilan siege would not get the support of his troops.

"We are focused in our work here," said Caballero, adding he said his men were surprised ("nabigla") at what happened in Makati.

In Cagayan de Oro City, Maj. Samuel Sapuit, spokesperson of the 4th Infantry Division, said it would not take part in any insurrection.

"We are preoccupied with securing the peace, not politics," he said.

Reports from Tonette Orejas, Gerwin Bayo and Amadeo Bagay, Inquirer Central Luzon, Volfanie Vinejas Jr., Vincent Cabreros, Yolanda Jarabe Ponce, Christine Avendaño and Gabriel Gonzalez, Inquirer Northern Luzon, Romulo B. Pontes, Geraldine Zialcita, Redempto Anda, Jean Domador, Inilfa I. Mallari Jr., Ephraim Aguilar and Bobby Labonia, Inquirer Southern Luzon, Joey A. Gabieta, Ric Bagtas, Jhon Pal, Carlo E. Gomez, Cynthia Balandan, Dexter P. Barga Jr., Jun Aviado and Rachel Arnaiz, Inquirer Visayas, Dennis Jay C. Santos, Julie S. Alipala, Ferdinand O. Zosa-ada, Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez, Amabilly del Prado, Jeffrey M. Tupas and Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez, Inquirer Mindanao

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Another Batasan blast victim dies

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE POWERFUL BLAST SUPposedly intended only for the late Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar at the Batasan Complex has claimed the life of another victim.

Ernesto Maiola, a member of Rep. Henry Prole Sr.'s staff, died yesterday at the St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City, bringing to the five number of victims in the explosion at the Batasan's south wing lobby on Nov. 13.

Marge Bustillo, an admitting assistant of the hospital, confirmed that Maiola had died, but refused to give more details.

Former Negros Oriental Rep. Herminia Teves said Maiola was still alive when he visited him the other night.

Bohol Rep. Imelda Quibi, a doctor who assisted victims after the blast, said Maiola had lost a leg because of the explosion. She said Maiola, like the four other fatalities, suffered severe burns.

They were dying, his aide Jaime Hayudini, Manuel Dable and Mani Bustillo. Dable was the driver of Cebuleña Rep. Lauro Miraflor Baguio, who was also injured in the blast, while Bustillo worked for Representative Teves.

Teves, who sustained severe burns and fractures, is still confined at St. Luke's.

Police have granted at least three suspects who allegedly carried out an order to assassinate Akbar.

What was Trillanes thinking?

his group walked out of a Makati court hearing and holed themselves up at the Manila Peninsula hotel.

"With all honesty, I didn't know about it," said Jimenez, who is facing rebellion charges for allegedly urging to overthrow the Arroyo administration. Actually I left had that (the) person told me that there was such a plan."

Baliwasan, among the Cabinet officials who quit the Arroyo administration in 2005 and demanded her resignation, said she was convinced Trillanes' action was still largely spontaneous.

Wasted effort

"It's a desperate move from someone so frustrated," she said. "The results we get from the government every day are just too much."

Cortez, chair of the anti-drugs

LONG TIME NO SEE. But there was the well-known relentless Arroyo critic Linda Montayre out in her favorite online cafe in the Peninsula. The self-styled president of the Philippine Constitutive Assembly was busy texting on her cell phone and networking with anyone who came to her. MANNY DACBAY

National Council of Concerned Volunteers, said: "The effort was somehow wasted because it was not coordinated."

Baliwasan said Trillanes was naturally frustrated because he still could not sit in the Senate despite the 11 million people who voted him into office.

She said she heard about "reservations" in the military about two weeks ago but there were no specific details.

"The main reason we weren't there (in Makati) was because we didn't know what it was all about," she said.

But Trillanes was not entirely a lone wolf in Baliwasan's book.

"He accomplished something by again bringing home the point that people can get desperate and that desperation has serious consequences for the nation," she said.

"Being it's Trillanes, 'Tomorrow, it will be someone else.'"

Political naivete

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said it was political naivete on the part of Trillanes and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim to carry out the siege without broad support from the people.

"They may have had the wrong impression that making a call to people would draw a quick response. People power requires organized groups, an experience has shown," Ocampo said.

Linda Montayre, a well-known Arroyo critic and president of the People's Constitutive Assembly (PCA), sounded like the Lorax when the Makati siege was all about.

At the height of the standoff, Montayre was just a few steps away from the Makati Avenue entrance of the hotel and busy with text messages and calls on her four mobile phones.

Other groups will come'

"This is just the start, other groups will come out, toughening [up] Sept. [Oct 2007]," she said in an on-camera interview.

Montayre even told journalists that a "new Philippines and a new leadership will emerge soon in Mahawlang" and that Mr Arroyo would soon be "kicked out of the Palace."

With Montayre were a handful of civilian supporters chanting "Resign Ebdane, resign," and distributing leaflets and poster portraits of Trillanes.

Another Arroyo detractor, Lingpay Alonzo, was at the foot of the Nancy Jupino stairs talking to other reporters while surrounded by another small group of supporters singing "Lupang Hinirang."

Montayre claimed that aside from the Magdalo hardcore group led by Trillanes, two more groups within the Armed Forces would "take action anytime, any minute soon."

Montayre named the two groups as "Scots of Bonifacio" and "Magdiwang."

The Oust Ignacio-led by a retired, "disgraced" and active officer, Montayre further claimed, without naming him.

"Magdiwang," she said, is led by a certain Capt. Noel Galvez. Asked if that was a real name or just a pseudonym, Montayre said: "That's how I know him. He is accordion military officer."

Erap not part of it

Montayre said what happened at the Peninsula was something that was planned, supposedly a culmination of a series of meetings.

The PCA, Scots of Bonifacio, Magdiwang and Magdalo—as said Montayre—are just among the many groups under the Filipino Democratic Nationalistic Reforms, or FDNR.

Asked if any political figure, like former President Joseph Estrada, was connected to FDNR, Montayre said Estrada was not aware of the plan.

"Kapag alam niya, nahuhuliasan at saka may kumukuha na sa kanya, kaya nga nandiyan ang kanilang (Pinto ga siang) when he gets to know about them. Besides, he has a deal with Mahawlang. He is not part of this and we don't want him to be part of this)."

Last chance

"Merong ng isang pring sangon lapa Alang na ang ang ng pangalo (This has long been discussed—that's why the President's forces are cautious)," Montayre said.

Asked where the Magdiwang and the forces of Bonifacio groups would come, she said: "They will come out, they have to come out, this is the last chance."

But no one came.

By the time police started rushing arrests inside the Peninsula, Montayre was no longer in sight. With reports from TJ Burgonio

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GMA off to Europe tonight

JUST TWO DAYS AFTER CRUSHING 400 US-trained Crusade soldiers, President Macapagal-Arroyo leaves tonight for Europe, confident that any residual threats to her 46-year administration had been wiped out.

Her eight-day trip, which will take her to Spain and the United Kingdom, and a previous visit to France, will be highlighted by an audience with Queen Elizabeth II at the Buckingham Palace in London on Dec. 6.

While Vice President Noli de Castro is the de facto caretaker of the government while over the Chief Executive goes abroad, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita has been tasked by Ms Arroyo to oversee the day-to-day operations in the Palace.

Ermita will be aided by Presidential Management Staff Chief Cerge Remonde and members of the Cabinet who are not traveling with the President.

The President will have a large delegation composed of congressional officials, Cabinet members led by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, Trade Secretary Peter Favila and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Defense and top Philippine Chinese businessmen.

In premature Malacañang's Foreign Trade Office and Protocol office had not made public the delegation list. Even the President's departure statement, which is usually issued ahead of the trip, was not made available yesterday.

A Malacañang official, who was not authorized to speak on the matter, told the Inquirer that "so many" government officials led by Trade members has lobbied to be included in the trip.

Large official delegation

The official said Ambassador Mariano Beyran, chief presidential protocol, had to trim down the list on Thursday, after Malacañang gave a green light to proceed with the trip. "We have a very large official and business delegation," said the official, quoting Beyran.

To stress that President Arroyo was confident that she would reach the upcoming forays said the trip would push through.

"That's to how confident we are," he said.

Ms Arroyo's party will leave just before midnight tonight (Saturday) on a Philippine Airlines Airbus A340-300 flight to France.

The President and select members of her delegation will spend their Sunday in Lourdes, hearing Mass at the Chapels de la Grotte-Basilique before embarking on her state and official visits to Spain and UK, respectively.

Her party will promptly depart for Madrid after lunch, arriving in the Spanish capital at 4 p.m. The following day, she will meet with Spanish senators before attending a private lunch hosted by King Carlos I and Queen Sofia at the Palacio de el Pardo.

The President is also scheduled to meet a host of Spanish officials led by Spanish President Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, businessmen and, the Filipino community.

Ms Arroyo will depart for London on Wednesday. Besides meeting the Queen, she will touch base with steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal.

Mittal is the president and chief operating officer of Arcelor Mittal, the combination of the world's No. 1 and No. 2 steel companies, Arcelor and Mittal, listed.

Michael Lim Ubac

The Daily Gospel

Saturday, December 1, 2007
34th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jer 33:14-16
Gospel: Luke 21:34-36

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Be on your guard, or see your hearts be weighed down with a life of pleasure, drunkenness and worldly cares, lest that day catch you suddenly as on a trap. For it will come upon all the inhabitants of the whole earth. But watch at all times and pray that you may be able to escape all that is bound to happen and to stand before the Son of Man.'

Commentary

This is the last day of the liturgical year 2007. Luke's gospel warns that ill fare with anguish and fear for his people who ought to be hopeful and watchful until the end. In fact, this general end judgment was presumed in favor of those who remained fully in the vision of the Son and the vision whereupon those who do so find salvation daily. They are given over to God and not to fate, and a welcoming happens. And his vision speaks of the last judgment and the time when all the world will be held to the scale of justice and then will be in the hands of the powers that ruled this world (often in opposition to God's justice and merciful forgiveness and his Jesus seems to). We are not caught up in the day-to-day cut-n-dried being in the world. 'Be first, but we first to God's time to end we must pray to the attentive to God's day and God's presence. The Son of Man will come in glory, he comes to the poor and the crucified daily. The Son of Man is always coming. Are we ready to stand before him for all this?

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Rebellion charges set vs Trillanes, et al.

To page A 2

Inquirer said no preliminary investigation. He said his arrest memorandum was that "The basis of the investigation by respondent is the case of rebellion is starting to rebellion."

"The investigation is based on the premise that a crime of rebellion and inciting to rebellion have been committed." Gonzalez said in a phone interview.

He said it was "clear" that the "ingredients" of the crime were present in the hotel siege.

List of detainees

(Provided by PNP)

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. [illegible]
4. [illegible]
5. [illegible]
6. [illegible]
7. [illegible]
8. [illegible]
9. [illegible]
10. [illegible]
11. [illegible]
12. [illegible]
13. [illegible]
14. [illegible]
15. [illegible]
16. [illegible]
17. [illegible]
18. [illegible]
19. [illegible]
20. [illegible]
21. [illegible]
22. [illegible]
23. [illegible]
24. [illegible]
25. [illegible]

"There was an uprising, a demand for President Macapagal-Arroyo to step down, and an attempt to challenge [her] authority and [prevent] her, the Senate and the House of Representatives from performing their constitutional duties," he said.

Explaining the meaning "ingredient," Gonzalez cited the pamphlets and posters of rebels. He said police had found M16 rifles, pistols and hand grenades in some of the hotel rooms.

But he said the filing of the rebellion charges would be "subject to the results of the inquest and/or preliminary investigation." The "inquest proceedings" against Trillanes and the others started at Camp Crame last night.

According to Gonzalez, the DOJ prosecutors will start the investigation when the PNP's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group submits to his office its report on the siege.

He said he expected the CIDG to submit its report last night or today.

Gonzalez also said Monday was the earliest the police could transport Trillanes, Lim and the others named in the arrest warrant issued by Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Oscar Pimentel, to face the contempt charge against them.

He pointed out that with the arrests made on Thursday and yesterday being a holiday, the new working day would be Monday.

Reyes said the use of force by the police and military on Thursday was "not needed" but "is a mix of graduated response."

Reyes said a combination of shock and "persuasive fire" was used to bring about the "psychological effect" that Trillanes, Lim and the 30 or so members of the Magdalo group were facing overwhelmed by a superior force.

Strategy

He said he wanted the troops to show the Magdalo soldiers that there was "no hesitancy" on the part of the PNP and the Armed Forces.

MIA ON HOLD. PNP Director Gerry Ulang during a press conference at Camp Crame: Arson, just for "psychological effect" of a full force committed to take out the Trillanes group, he explains. DENNIS C. ESCOTO

Reyes said government troops knew that the Magdalo soldiers had brought high-powered firearms and that they were in "sniper positions" on the hotel's mezzanine.

"The sniper positions would have to be dealt with effectively [assigned to arrest the warrantees] of arrest. We had to employ [AFP's] for the protection of our policemen to run the main entrance," Reyes said.

He said these had police water in sufficient stores to spit protesting, they would have been picked off by snipers.

"Our objective was to arrest them. If they resisted, necessary force was employed," he said.

But despite the resort to display superior force, Reyes said, non-lethal weapons, were used.

Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, PNP spokesperson and a founder of the elite SAF, refused Reyes's statements.

He said the AFP's were used "to provide cover and to ensure the break-in to insert our troops," and that "persuasive means" were intended to convince the Magdalo soldiers of the government troops' superior firepower."

Chief Supt. Leonardo Santiago, SAF chief, said he deployed 1,21 members for the operation. But soldiers he met Reyes was able to say how many Marines were deployed.

Sincerity

Reyes told the PNP had tried to negotiate with Trillanes and company to give up peacefully.

He said a deadline was also set for the surrender, and that Director Geary Barias, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, "showed sincerity by talking to them himself [instead of sending] a subordinate officer."

Reyes said the PNP was working against time to end the standoff before dark.

"It's hard to conduct operations at night. Your precision might be set so impressible as you would have it. [Also] there might be an augmentation [of the Magdalo forces]. Second, there might be supporters coming outside. Preventing reinforcement [of The Magdalo soldiers] might. The [other] side [may] be very much used to arms [or] makes. The longer we drag on, the harder it would be [to finish]."

Miriam: Expel Trillanes

THE PNP CHIEF SEES EXposure of the "failed state" the Magdalo soldiers had tried back at government troops.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago is preparing to ask the Senate to reprimand or even expel Trillanes for his behavior on Thursday.

In a resolution that she plans to submit for action on Monday, Santiago said: "The Senate reminds the citizens and privileges should move immediately and summoned the proper punishment for Senator Trillanes for disorderly behavior and unparliamentary words and language, including, if necessary, his suspension or expulsion from the Senate."

The ethics committee is chaired by Sen. Pia Cayetano.

Santiago said she believed that Trillanes' acts on Thursday had been planned. "He participated in the mockery of a prepared seditious statement calling not only for the President to resign, but also for the public, in effect, to compel her to leave office."

Trillanes had participated in a staged rally of Mr Arroyo and others in joining the latter in her trip to London and Spain tonight. Senate rules allow the punishment of any member for disorderly behavior upon the recommendation of the Senate committee, as long as this is concurred in by two-thirds of the members of the chamber.

But she conceded that penalizing Trillanes would be difficult considering that his opposition also represented how the majority in the Senate.

Premature

Before the Thursday standoff, Trillanes had been in detention on a coup d'etat charge for his role in the Oakwood mutiny of 2003. He has yet to attend a session at the Senate.

Sen. Pia Cayetano said that while her committee was bound to act on Santiago's resolution, any Senate action on Trillanes would be "premature" because his cases were still pending in the courts.

She cited the case of former Rep. Romeo Alvarez who was expelled from the House of Representatives only after the Supreme Court had upheld his conviction of rape.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. concurred with Cayetano, saying, "Trillanes is innocent of the crimes until he is convicted. He has to be convicted first before he is punished. He should not be prejudged before he is convicted."

Senate President Manuel Villar said he would not rush into that the chamber should tread carefully in disciplining one of its own.

Send clear message

He said he doubted whether Trillanes could be expelled, especially with the opposition in control of the Senate.

But whether the Senate reprimands, suspends or expels Trillanes, Santiago said it was important that it send a clear message to the public that it was not tolerating crimes committed by a senator.

She said some opposition senators who were also lawyers like herself were used likely to "tampered and offended" by Trillanes' actions.

"Magbabalasa ng demokrasya kasi. Ok a feigning instigation. He is interpreting the Constitution as a person, which should not be because you need four years to have the skill to interpret it," she said.

'Reming' survivor pins hopes on 4 photographs, wants dialogue with GMA

To page A 2

sent her and taking a video of her slow gesture and bruises.

The first album set of Ms Arroyo grasping her hands and promising that she and the office of typhoon victims will return to their normal lives and a relocation site will be provided "as soon as possible" in Nueva Vizcaya, about 70 de Castro locals say.

Forgotten promise

"But the President seems to have forgotten her promise," Samson, 44, told the inquirer.

"We have been waiting and waiting but we are still in the shelter up to now. Is that what she calls 'as soon as possible?' Does it mean a year or two more?"

With PHP1 in her pocket and the four snapshots in a plastic envelope, Samson left Guinobatan for Manila on Monday night. He hopes to see any of the other government officials present during that visit on Dec. 3.

But she ended up in the Inquirer office in Makati City on Tuesday, clueless on how to reach anyone of them.

"I just want to be able to get to see President. And I have those pictures with me to prove that she talked to me on that day and made me a promise," Samson said, her eyes brimming with tears.

Without the pictures, she said, she would not have had the courage to leave the two boys—John Paul, 12, and Alex, 17—at the evacuation center at the "Oval," as most folks at the Marcos Rotarde High School.

Nightmares

John Paul still gets nightmares of the typhoon, Samson said. "He wakes up in the middle of the night screaming that the floodwaters are in his room."

She herself can still remember the black torrents that carried her to an electrical tower three kilometers from her home.

Surviving the storm

After being tossed and turned by the strong current for two hours, she managed to hold on to the tower and then set out to look for her boys.

Waist-deep Monday, she inspected the bodies scattered like dead fish, flipping them over in the course of her search.

Mother and son were eventually reunited in a hospital.

Samson said she lost her home and her 6-year-old stepsister found clothing business in Bagong Silang.

These days, she occasionally takes in laundry to earn a little money to augment the food subsidy provided by non-government organizations.

She cannot get a regular job because she has to look after Alex, who suffers from a hefty seizure from the tragedy.

Alex, in the other hand, has had to stop schooling.

Dec. 3 pleasant

Samson said the latest news she had received was that local officials in Guinobatan was that the Oval would phase out its food program by Dec. 3.

The agency has been providing each displaced family in Guinobatan half a sack of rice, two kilos of sardines and two liters of cooking oil every two weeks.

"I decided to come to Manila even if I have little cash so I could talk to the President, and so that my family and the rest of the typhoon survivors will at the evacuation center will be served from misery," Samson said.

"I don't like us to live in dog kennels," she said of the shelters—plywood dwellers measuring about eight square meters.

But in her despair, Samson said she thanked God for sparing Guinobatan from Typhoon "Mona," which was initially reported to make landfall in Albay but veered toward northern Luzon.

"If it had not reversed its path, we would have been left homeless again. Our churches too would've survive a strong wind," she said.

268 families

In a phone interview on Thursday, Cristina Aranas, officer in charge of the Municipal Social Welfare Department, said there were still 268 families in the "Oval" awaiting relocation to the nearby village of Maramba.

Likely the only local government officials assured the homeless residents their relocation sites would be made available for them within their months.

Aranas said the typhoon survivors should not worry because the local government was taking care of them.

She admitted that there had been some delay in developing the relocation site, but said the construction of core shelters was still ongoing.

"Most probably, by next week, the construction of core shelters by the Department of Social Welfare and Development will start," Aranas said.

But Aranas was not too hopeful. She said she visited the relocation site in Maramba two weeks ago and was disappointed with what she saw.

She said only three units, including a health center, had been completed.

"I was appealing to the President to fulfill her promise to us so we can move on with our lives," she said.

Postcard-perfect

In the town of Daraga, the choice will find the country scenic breathtaking—a mound of slopes with crystal-clear waters. Aquinos have to the task of tossing crop out of the land, mayors Mayon Volcano, with not a cloud covering its glorious cone.

But the postcard-perfect beauty is lost on Jose Romero, treasurer of the group of the Administer Bicolnon for Community Development Foundation Inc. (Ancodef). Jovanie what he sees is what has consumed of what he said 160 or so other families used to call home.

On that fateful day when his wife and the considered to almost three hours, Romero and his neighbors did not immediately evacuate to points. They thought it was just another typhoon passing the night the province.

But when the winter was rapidly and turned muddy they had to flee their home.

Romero churned dearly because he literally held on to a tree for dear life, as did his 7-year-old son, whom he surely feared he had lost to the flood.

The son of his family found a safe haven in a nearby four-storey house, joining some of his neighbors who were weeping and sobbing as the lashing rains lashed.

The rains eventually did and Romero found that his house, along with the rest of the village, had been buried under mud and boulders.

All he had left were the clothes on his back and a few hundred pesos stuffed in a small backpack.

Still, Romero told the Inquirer, he counted himself among the lucky ones "because my family is safe."

Building heroes

Romero said his colleagues in civil society have been at the forefront of efforts to get Albay back on its feet—from search-and-rescue missions to distributing relief goods, and now, building new houses.

In Daraga, the local villages are largely grass and many displaced families have moved on to halfway houses built by foreign donors and local NGOs as in put-in-mind resettlement sites put up by the local government in cooperation with such groups as Gawad Kalinga (GK), Habitat for Humanity and Coca-Cola Foundation.

GK homes are the most modest, with red, green or blue single-detached houses properly spaced from each other and at the end of the area. Habitat for Humanity and Coca-Cola Foundation favor the duplex style.

Arcodef, a member of The Partnership and Access Center Albay funded by the Peso and Equity Foundation (PEF), is helping families—mostly fishfolk—who decided to stay where they are and build new homes out of locally-sourced materials.

PEF has also bought a five-hectare property in Daraga where an "ecovillage" will be put up for 140 families, all of whom will come from the NGO scene.

Anguish

But Romero said that even if people had power back on their lives, they were still embarrassed and anguished.

"I know one colleague who sleeps with one foot on the floor so he'll know if floodwater has entered his house," he said.

Then there are the children crying at the sound of rain, afraid that they would go through the same harrowing experience again.

It will be infinitely more difficult for those who lost loved ones.

Romero cited the case of a father often seen staring into space, lost in the pain of losing two sons.

The father was actually holding on to a young son, whom he rescued moments after the flood. He tried to search another son from the raging floodwaters.

In the end, he lost both sons, and has since been grappling with guilt.

Romero said it was not unusual to be overcome from Bicolanos to commit suicide. "I've come together, sometimes even before 40 hours, to talk about Reming."

It is their way of coping with the pain, he said.

Punishment

To Eliseo de Borrellano, president of the Dumaroan Small Fisherfolk Association, Reming was "punishment" for bad deeds.

He said there used to be a good divide between the forest and the coastal area. But after the flood came, rich and poor scrambled for whatever shelter they could find.

"There were 200 of us who found shelter beside the big house. There were no rich and poor then," he said.

Borrellano said Mr. and Mrs. Aliter Felt had become better people because of Reming. "Those who were lazy are now working, and those who used to depend on other people have learned to lend to themselves."

For example, he said, his neighbor had gone back to their livelihood and were now planning more crops—corn, sweet potato, cassava—to augment their income from selling fish.

"They are now ashamed to just ask for food," he said.

Borrellano said the change in ways was only succeeding by phrases "had crossed away from Albay.

It may then be a matter of time before the Daraga folk against see the beauty beyond the rubble.

Trillanes offers to pay for damage to the Pen

From page B1

But the luxury hotel will be closed for the weekend as management takes stock of the damage to the premises, including the left trunk of the car in which Lim had entered through, and arrange for the transfer of guests to nearby hotels.

Trillanes said his group would pay for the damage his coterie of soldiers and civilian supporters left in their six-hour takeover of the Manila Peninsula.

During the press conference before he was escorted out of the hotel, Trillanes was quick to answer that he would foot the bill. He did not clarify however, whether this would extend to the damage wrought by the police assault team particularly at the Pen's lobby.

The ornate lobby, with its comfortable loveseat-like leather chairs and sofas, is one of Manila's main meeting places for business executives, diplomats and those who just want to be seen.

Based on the initial assessment made by hotel engineers, the cost of damages could reach six figures, said Manolette Andres-Gan, executive director of public relations of Manila Peninsula.

He also said the hotel had not heard from the group of Trillanes nor has alleged offer to have the bill.

"Of course, he is welcome to pay, but as of now we have not heard from Senator from his representative," Gan Buhawen said.

Bullet holes on walls

The lobby turned into a virtual war zone as an armored personnel carrier crashed through its main doors while assault teams broke down the windows. The hotel's tables and chairs were also shredded by the Special Action Force. There were bullet holes on the walls and smoke while the target was searched. Trillanes' group occupied the Regal room on the second floor, which also served as his war room, and where sandwiches were served for lunch.

Before the siege, hotel managers had ordered Trillanes' takeover as a normal event. "It's just a press conference, everything is under control," said one manager who was still hopeful that Trillanes would leave before the 5 p.m. deadline.

Gan Buhawen told the inquirer that a banner affixed had called up Daniel Bachas, Manila Peninsula general manager, yesterday to express sympathy for Thursday's events.

The official inquired about the safety of the hotel guests, its employees and the progress of the repair work.

Gan Buhawen declined to reveal the official's identity.

'5-star rebels'

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, who was interviewed yesterday over government station dzRH, said the "five-star rebels" should pay for the damage at the Manila Peninsula.

Bunye said the law was very clear on who was liable for the damage at the hotel as he referred to the group of Trillanes and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim as the "five-star rebels."

The press secretary also said that the siege did not only damage hotel facilities but also disrupted business operations.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay visited the Manila Peninsula at noon yesterday and asked hotel management how city hall could help in the repair work.

He said he would ask the Department of Finance if the city could grant tax credit or holiday to the hotel.

Who is liable?

Whether the hotel plans to press charges is still the subject of discussion, according to Gan Buhawen.

"The management has not reached any decision if it will sue or whom to sue because the insurance people are still assessing the extent of the damage," he said.

Asked if anyone has offered to pay for the repair work, he said: "We have not received word from any faction...the government has told the Trillanes group."

Gan Buhawen, however, remains optimistic. He said hotel operations, including all its restaurants, would resume on Monday after noon.

"The hotel would reopen on Monday at 1 p.m. so it would only take a weekend to remove the lobby, which is the hotel's centerpiece," he said.

The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra's annual concert at the hotel lobby on Dec. 8 would also push through, he added.

The door leading to its grand lobby were destroyed by an armored carrier personnel when police smashed the door and Lim along with a small group of supporters to surrender.

MORE SHOCK AND AWE: Soldiers scramble as they arrive on Friday from the Northern Luzon Command to beef up NCRPO troops for what had been expected to be a big protest rally on National Human Day. AFP/ROSLAN RAHMAN

Trillanes' group occupied the hotel for six hours after they walked out of a Makati City court room.

Apart from the destroyed door, the main lobby on the ground floor took the brunt of the damage, with chairs and tables, as well as the carpet, needing repair, Gan Buhawen said.

"There were posttraumatic portions of the wall from the shrapnel" and the glass parts of the two front doors and walls were shattered, he said. But "the rooms pretty much were left untouched."

He said he did not expect the lobby to be fully fixed by Monday's reopening.

No reservations

Gan Buhawen said Trillanes' group did not make prior reservations. "They asked if they could use one room, and we offered them the Royal Suite/room," he said. Later, the group also used the adjoining Guerrero function room.

In the hotel's 81 years of operation, Thursday's siege was the first in his five hotel, he said.

He added that while the hotel was affected by the 1989 coup attempt staged by Sen. Gregorio Honasan against then President Corazon Aquino's government at the Hotel Intercontinental, what happened on Thursday did not come near it.

Guests, many of them foreign, were in and out of the hotel yesterday to retrieve their belongings. Most seemed unaffected by the incident.

Coffee, beer at the lobby

Chris Ostrowosky of California, who is here on business, recalled calmly sipping coffee in the lobby when the settlement Magdale exhibition scene "considering the show goes, nothing's wrong."

"I was in Greenbelt when I heard that something was happening in the hotel so I went. I walked past the wheels, ordered coffee and sat in the lobby," he said.

"In the three or four hours, it was not that tense. It was almost jovial. Everybody was smiling. It was pretty much business as usual," Ostrowosky said. He added that he left shortly before the military began its assault.

"I'll come back," said Tim Mahoney of New York, who is also in the country on business. "It was nice at all threatened, just uneasy," he said.

Ostrowosky said the hotel did not charge him anything for Thursday. He praised the hotel management for taking care of the guests' benefits and practically "hand-holding" them all they reached the hotels they moved in.

"They should have served some free Big Light," he joked.

Most of the guests were transferred to the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, while others moved to Dusit Hotel Nikko or the Hotel Intercontinental.

90 percent occupancy

At the time of the standoff, the hotel had about 90 percent occupancy rate, translating to some 400 guests. Aside from a scheduled wedding reception, there were five more major events that had to be moved elsewhere, Gan Buhawen said.

Average room rates at the Peninsula vary from $120 to $160 (between P5,000 and P6,800 plus).

Gan Buhawen said there were no reports from hotel guests of missing valuables so far. With a report from AFP

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The BIR advises the taxpayers of Revenue District Office (RDO) Nos. 47, 48, 49 and 50 and the Large Taxpayers District Office (LTDO) - Makati, who will file their 3rd calendar quarter corporate income tax return (ITR) and pay the taxes due thereon on December 10, 2007 to any Authorized Agent Bank (AAB), premises attached to Revenue District Office, without being penalized for "wrong venue". For this, taxpayers of the aforementioned offices who failed to file and pay on the aforesaid date were likewise given an extension of time to file and pay until Monday, December 17, 2007, without imposition of penalty for late filing and payment.

"The 3rd calendar quarter corporate income tax which covers the months of July, August and September of 2007 is due for payment on or before December 10, 2007. During the said day, all 3rd calendar quarter corporate tax returns (BIR Form 1702) must have been filed and all payments must have been paid on November 30 of this year. However, due to unavoidable circumstances, the attempted siege of last which was staged in Peninsula Hotel in Makati, near the Ayala Building where Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Revenue District Office (RDO) Nos. 47, 48, 49 and 50 and the Large Taxpayers District Office (LTDO) - Makati are holding their offices, some of the taxpayers were not able to file and pay their returns. Hence, the BIR decided to relax the existing policies on the strict implementation of the jurisdictional venue for filing and payment and extended the deadline to the following working day.

Razon: Plot is still active

From page A1

"When the Magdalo took over Oakwood, they staged the arrest with Col [redacted]. It's not an exception to that they still have the capability to do that," Razon said.

Ibrahim and Trillanes were among the leaders of the Oakwood Mutiny in July 2003.

Messianic people

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said "Messianic people" within the military were part of the hotel siege, which was led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and former Scout Ranger commander Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

Esperon said the military was able to "preempt a similar" group of officers and enlisted personnel from joining Lim at the Peninsula.

"There are the Messianic people who think they can give solutions to the problems of the country while they cannot even solve the problems of their own (military) units," Esperon said.

The Peninsula siege triggered the imposition of a curfew from Thursday midnight to dawn on Friday. Esperon said the curfew would not be announced.

The PNP's Directorate for Operations also downgraded the national police's alert status from full to normal alert.

Second time

This was the second time Ibrahim had escaped from military detention after being arrested for participating in the Oakwood uprising.

In December 2006, during a court hearing, he escaped from his military guards while in a Mitsubishi Adventure that was driven by his administrative and the military by posing as lawyers of himself as the lawyers showing him as military camp around the country.

He was rearrested in January 2007 in Mabalacat City at the complex of a military lawyer, Capt. Candelaria Rivera.

Switching loyalties

Razon said the PNP had dispatched tracker teams composed of members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the Intelligence Group (IG). Units of the AFP are also looking for Ibrahim, he said.

Razon said the police were also trying to account for the military security escorts of Trillanes and Lim.

"We are trying to account for the security escorts of Trillanes' group that were supposed to escort them but apparently (were) there (on) stage (they switched sides)," Razon said.

He said Ibrahim might have escaped because of the "confusion" at the hotel.

"During that stage and (negotiations) to arrest (a) surrender, Asiok (ambushed) (if only some people really helped us, they would not have escaped)," he said.

"One of the reasons to maintain some of our friends from the media was that the Magdalo (perceived themselves) as media. It was extremely difficult for us to determine attack or rebuke," Razon said.

Posed as mediaman

He said investigators received information that before police stormed the hotel, Ibrahim posed as a member of media, made his way to the lobby and later sat at the service floor of the hotel, where he exited and disappeared.

Razon said that at the very least, police were looking for four Magdalo officers "but we believe that there are more than that."

He said police recovered a document from one of the hotel's rooms detailing a plan by four groups composed of a total of 32 people to take over the Peninsula.

The documents, written on a piece bond paper in block ink, detailed the members of the four groups and their codenames or nom de guerre like Gembit, Zoom, Bagobayan, Jaspet, Abdul, Tandex, Jojo and Alibata.

The document also detailed the positions the teams were supposed to take and their "points of insertion."

Codenames

Razon said the police were working to identify the persons behind the codenames; he would not say if the codenames were those of people in business or politics.

The PNP Chief said he believed Trillanes' group was one of the four groups.

Since police had not accounted for the three other groups, Razon said the plot to destabilize the government was still "active."

Esperon, for his part, said the military was looking into the possible involvement of some politicians in Thursday's incident but he declined to identify them.

Esperon said recovered documents showed plans by the group to declare a new government.

"What they did is still connected to today's activities," Esperon said, adding police had received information a plot to destabilize the government was supposed to be launched during National Heroes Day private journalists.

The military chief would not divulge the identities of others involved with the Trillanes group.

50 detained, see list Page A8

Razon said a total of 50 people, including 14 Magdalo soldiers, had been taken into custody. They included former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and Isidoro, Quezon Bishop emeritus Julio Labayen.

Upon request by the Catholic Church, Labayen was released yesterday in the custody of Isidoro Bishop Rolando Tirona.

Police recovered firearms and a hand grenade from rooms in the hotel.

Razon also said the police were looking into any links of militant groups to Trillanes and Lim, ex-Senator, if any, in Thursday's coup.

Razon confirmed reports that could-be of Tondo, Manila, had been rewarded for P1500 to join a rally in support of Trillanes.

Esperon admitted that had Trillanes group succeeded in its plan, it could have been a "major source of embarrassment and a major source of threat" to the military.

Facing East

When reporters asked if the officers detained in Fort. Bifid, were part of Thursday's incident, Esperon nodded and said, "Sort of. And other up also appear there if are facing in their direction now)."

Esperon, on his spoke, was facing east, where Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, is located.

Lim, Marine Col. Ariel Querubin, former Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, and seven other Marine officers and 15 Scout Ranger officers have been detained in Tanay for more than a year after they were tagged as leaders of a failed attempt to overthrow the government in February last year.

Esperon said the military would "let Lim watch more charges.

"Sigurado (ang) isang kasuhan (They committed so many offenses)," Esperon said.

Fate of Faeldon

Esperon also said that even if there were four military rooms from the Magdalo group of junior officers that joined Trillanes and Lim at The Manila Peninsula, a "loyalty check" within the AFP was not necessary.

"The Armed Forces is solid," he said.

Referring to Faeldon, Esperon said: "The mastermind is on. We has done it before. Pero (but) we can make a report of the removal of Faeldon."

Faeldon's lawyer, Jesus Cera-Angeles, urged the military "to observe and respect Capt. Faeldon's human rights if he is convicted in their custody."

"After he had been interviewed en route to the hotel and at the hotel, he has not been heard of since. He was not among the arrested arrested at the hotel, and he is now in his detention quarters in Fort. Bonifacio. He had just informed his counsel that he was enlisting in the Marine brig," Angeles said in a statement sent to reporters.

Angeles said the lack of information about Faeldon was "worrisome for his family and friends".

"We therefore ask that the PNP or AFP refrain any and all information that they may have on Capt. Faeldon's whereabouts."

FLOORED: After their surrender, Magdalo soldiers sit in bunk-effect and ordered to get down at the Peninsula lobby while they wait to be transported to Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan. AFP PHOTO

ABS-CB

From page A1

[redacted] descriptions of journalists do not be justified on the basis of identity check. It is governed in news coverage with an eye to protect the media."

"We in ABS-CBN News [redacted] the illegal seizure of our cameras, footages in the media and the treatment (they were) subjected to in the hands of the police," Bhinka the network's Current A said in an official statement.

News said the network's [redacted] heard "guards forcibly shut down [redacted]

"We owe no account why [redacted] had to be handcuffed and [redacted] (Sen. Antonio Trillanes)', the government that [redacted] and we too chose to pursue [redacted] public's right to the truth."

Cherie Villa, head of ABS-CBN [redacted] said this network was [redacted] billity of filing charges against [redacted] ees who had assaulted up [redacted]

"We'll investigate them th[redacted] guilty us. I heard Sen. Ant[redacted] (It was police violently [redacted] he free's denied. I think that's [redacted] reason they had [redacted] "she was [redacted] CBN website (www.abs-cbn[redacted]

Police had stalled the ent[redacted] men who covered the stand[redacted] of them into a PNP van, [redacted] Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicut[redacted] yesterday has "preventing" [redacted]

The news has elicited [redacted] and foreign journalists.

At a press conference, Ba[redacted] some arrest than some [redacted] against us. That is a free [redacted] charges against them if they [redacted] ing journalists to carry out [redacted] are not looking at obstruction [redacted]

Friends

But Pano expressed the [redacted] would be exchanged bet[redacted] the PNP. "If they want a [redacted]

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they can just sue us. But we don't want that to happen because they are our friends," he said.

The PNP chief also said the police had allowed the media to do their job, and the latter should extend the same courtesy.

"We can understand the purpose of the media. Why can't they understand the purpose of the police when they performed their duty? Some media can't understand that. Huwalain pa ang interview do (They're limiting us by doing our duties)."

Generic acknowledged that the media was more often than not first at the scene, beating out the police. He said he himself relied on the media in critical situations.

Fair situation for system

"We have no problems with that," he said. "But our concern is that when we arrive at the scene, it's our turn to work. In our job, are needed to protect the welfare of everyone so that there will be no collateral damage."

He added that there was no effort on the part of the PNP to crack down on the media.

Hamid said he had directed the PNP's Directorate for Police Community Relations and Public Information Office to coordinate with the Kapisanan ng Brodkaster ng Pilipinas and other media groups to hold a meeting to discuss future coverage of similar events.

"We want to discuss these problems with the objective to resolve them, so that we will have a smoother system and so that problems won't arise in the future," he said.

Mad at war

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Presidential Management Staff Secretary Ronald Llamas reminded law officials that his administration was "not at war with the media."

Gonzalez said Mr Arroyo had met with the Cabinet last week to say disaster in Quezon City Thursday standoff at the Manila Peninsula and the rounding of the reporters and camera-men who covered it, and issued a "guideline."

"We should be very, very circumspect when it comes to the media and we're not at war with the media," he quoted Ms Arroyo as saying.

Asked why Ms Arroyo had issued the reminder, Gonzalez said: "She was just trying to emphasize that processes handle these things properly."

He said Ms Arroyo might have conveyed the reminder because, as Cabinet officials had observed, "the Trillanes capers was sidelined" by the report on the siege the members of the media were handled by the police and military.

Gonzalez stressed that the heated takeover of Trillanes and company was "the real event."

"Had it succeeded, it could have changed the course of history," he said.

In disguise

In a phone interview, Bunag said she underwent the challenges faced by the police, who had tried to justify the arrests of journalists by saying that some of Trillanes' supporters could have disguised themselves as members of the media in an attempt to escape.

"But they could have done the processing (while journalists) there. They only need to call the media organizations; we could have sent our heads on the spot to do the verification," Bunag said.

But Armed Forces Chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon hinted at a possible reconciliation between some journalists and Trillanes' group.

Convivance

In an interview with reporters at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, Esperon was asked what could have been the scenario had the journalists left Trillanes and company at the Manila Peninsula.

He replied: "That will have to be looked at separately because from what we are seeing, it looked like there was a media setup here even before the incident. Did you see the cables there? Aren't those cables of TV stations?"

Chilling effect

Asked if he thought there was connivance between the media and Trillanes' group, Esperon said: "You call that convivance? I do not know but they had good coverage. But certainly we will look into it."

Esperon also said the journalists' refusal to vacate the hotel despite the authorities' request would also be looked into because they "blocked the endorsement of the law."

"We are not prohibiting you from covering all these things. But I hope that it we have a request for order in the coverage, you will not go to the middle of things because we don't want you to get hurt," he said.

Legal assistance

A group of human rights lawyers condemned the arrests of the journalists and of fired senators in filing legal suits.

"The media people were exercising not only their profession but also their constitutional right to freedom of expression and of speech, or press freedom," the National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL), chaired by human rights lawyer Romeo Capulong, said in a statement.

According to NUPL secretary general Alex Colmenares, an "invitation" which cannot be refused is a contradiction on liberty and is, therefore, an unreal arrest.

"The arrest was meant to instill a chilling effect on the media and curtail the people's rights to be informed," Colmenares said.

Rep. Teodoro Casiño of the party-list group Bayan Muna said there was no way the constitutional guarantees can readily be arrested.

"All the measures by Defense Secretary Hilario Ermita and the Philippine National Police cannot justify the arrests of the media. The arrest of more than 30 journalists is a blatant attack on press freedom and the people's right to know," Casiño said.

"The aim is to intimidate journalists that aims to prevent the media from efficiently doing their job of bringing the unadulterated truth to the public," he added.

Even Ms Arroyo's allies in the House said their illegal arrests deserve censure in the way the journalists were rounded up.

Manila Rep. Bienvenido Abante told the business he would file on Monday a resolution calling for an inquiry into the manner by the commission on public information and the commission on public order and security.

Asked if the thought the arrests of journalists would have a chilling effect on them, Abante said: "Definitely."

Bicol Rep. Edcel Lagman, chair of the House committee on appropriations and a human rights advocate, said crafting the journalists' arrests "smacked of martial law policy intended to question them on their identities.

"That was more reminding the reporters," Lagman said. While reports from Hilario Ermita, Christine G. Avendaño and Norman Bordadora

Journalists cracked jokes as they waited for attack

By Jess Diaz, Jr.

scant would finally break into the hotel. Some of the more experienced journalists who ignored routine police orders to leave the Peninsula knew, as though by instinct, what to expect.

Going for the curtains

Those who had lingered at the lobby began tearing up table cloths. Some went for the curtains while another managed to find coins to insert in vending machines. Other just got their heads. All computers on look for water.

"What's that for?" a young newspaper reporter asked a senior male colleague from radio.

"Your gas," he said. "In five minutes or so they will be fumigating it."

Cavorting eye-eyes were rants, as any veteran in the coverage of protest rallies would know, provides the first defense against the sting of tear gas.

Typical of a big event coverage, some info would gets way in lightsticked interviews among press people. As the Peninsula is that one somebody was always breaking the ice despite the intimidating smack and a little black humor was welcome.

"It's been nice knowing you," one bread-basket reporter said to another in mock farewell.

"Writers' picnic!" said a female reporter from a news website, inviting anyone for a scenario' photo before the photo gets printed by a batch of bullets (and hopefully after).

Deathly silence

But moments before the attack, the lobby actually came to a deathly silence, amounting to one acrimony three of the journalists by their ears still wearing some of the anti-riot gear, unconcerned seized dark baddies for cigarettes, apparently to help calm their nerves.

The Magdalo soldiers, at this point, were all gathered on the second floor. One of them was heard telling journalists to "report" as true gen. Antonio Trillanes.

"That a typical shock and awe," another rebel soldier later remarked after hearing the first warning shots.

The initially hazardous volleys became a steadily sweep clearing the glass doors and peppering the lower level of the lobby.

By the time the standard was put began performing the lobby, a panel of snipers had caught fire. The was a few minutes past 5pm.

Strange calmness

An armored personnel carrier suddenly broke in—and literally ripped in an old sidebar. It stopped right beside the lobby's giant Christmas tree.

Heavily armed men in gas masks began storming from behind the APC and more their way up the main stairs leading to the second floor using where Trillanes and his group—along with most of the trapped journalists—had convened.

One of the raiders was heard shouting at a news crew: "Labas na dyan! Iisa-isa! (Get out of here! One by one!)" It seemed their negotiations for the assault team to see as proof they were not the targets.

The "gas" forced some of the Magdalo soldiers, then positioned on the second floor hallway, to flatfoot retreat into a ballroom corridor leading to the Filial Tower, where Trillanes had set up a command post at the start of the six hour standoff.

Some of the Magdalos and journalists rushed to the toilet to wash the sting off their eyes. Some looked for the nearest fire exits or adjacent rooms, but found none.

Coverage gets cut

And yet media coverage never stopped amid this chaos. Cameramen, those who still could, kept their viewfinders rolling and capturing live the frantic "orders" that came to and fro among the cornered Magdalos, to-wireless were still being recorded.

Shouting match

For 20 minutes, as the assault was in progress at the lobby Trillanes and a number of Magdalos, their civilian supporters (some of whom were senior citizens) and some media men locked themselves in and assisted their foes inside the Filial boardroom.

Tear gas had already begun seeping into the already suffocating room.

Finally, four assault cops in gas masks came storming in, their automatic rifles pointed to their red-eyed captives.

Before anyone could be handcuffed, an enraged Trillanes was encouraged to vent at one of his captors: "Huwag kayo mag-pasaway na lang ngayon! Let's just have a shouting match here, if you like!"

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OPINION

Ways of the Gestapo

EDITORIAL

AS SEN. ANTONIO TRILLANES IV PREPARED TO turn himself in to arresting officers, after realizing that his second attempt to topple President Macapagal-Arroyo had failed, he advised that what had transpired only showed to what great lengths the President would go to hang on to power. "You have been witnesses and victims of the kind of ruthlessness that this government has been giving [us] to the people," said the former Navy lieutenant who also led the failed Oakwood mutiny in July 2003. He was, of course, referring to the overpowering force the administration unleashed against his group of about 30 soldiers and a few dozen civilian supporters.

But very many people would agree that the government used excessive force to quash the rebellion. But very few would disagree that the way the police handled—or more accurately, mishandled—the members of the media who were covering the event bordered on ruthlessness.

As soon as Trillanes et al. signaled surrender, the police moved in to arrest everyone in sight, regardless of whether they were Magdalo soldiers or sympathizers or media people going about their business of reporting what was obviously a significant event. Then they tied up everyone with plastic tie wraps (except for a few lucky female reporters who refused to be subjected to such indignity) and herded them into buses that would later bring them to Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan. Some media men who stuck their hands out of the windows to show to television cameras were hit with sticks. A few said the police pointed their guns at them.

What was their crime? None, police and civilian officials declared. Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno explained that there were reports that some Magdalo members or sympathizers had disguised themselves as members of the media and the police wanted to make sure they didn't get away. So, he said, everyone was being taken to Bicutan for "processing" so that the authorities could determine if those who claimed they were from the media were indeed what they claimed to be.

Of course, the police cannot be expected to know each and every reporter, photographer or cameraman working for scores of media organizations based in Metro Manila. But unless someone does not watch the news on TV at all, he would surely know that Cea Drilon and Pinky Webb work for ABS-CBN and Sandra Aguinaldo for GMA-7. Their faces are their IDs, so why did the police have to confirm their identities in Bicutan? And why was it not good enough for the police that top station officials would vouch for the identities of the people assigned to cover the event?

It all but the police wanted was to check the media people's identity, they could have done that right at the hotel by asking for everyone's ID and calling the newsrooms to verify. But no, the police had to humiliate the media people and force them to go through the ordeal of being handcuffed and transported to Bicutan. Only to find out then their information about infiltration was wrong, since they found not a single impostor among the media people they had brought to for questioning.

But Puno himself hinted that there was a dark reason for the arrests other than identity checks, when he accused the media people of "wittingly or unwittingly, all of them, obstructing justice." In other words, the administration suspected the journalists who covered the event of being part of the plot to topple Mr. Arroyo. In fact, PNP Director General Avelino Razon is now threatening to charge the journalists present at the Manila Peninsula with obstruction of justice if they would file any charges against the policemen who hauled them off to Bicutan.

The media should call Razon's bluff. Let's see if he can find a friendly judge who will declare it a crime to cover a breaking news. If the media would blink in the face of such intimidation, the Gestapo in the PNP and in Malacañang will continue to march in triumph, crushing under their heels everyone's political rights and civil liberties.

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The silence of the camps

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

BRIG. GEN. DANILO LIM AND FORMER NAVY Lt. (sg.) Lorenzo Jim, Antonio Trillanes IV are two of the unarmed officers in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. They are highly regarded for their integrity and for their commitment to the office corps. For senior officers in the Philippine military today even much their popularity among the soldiers, it is significant that they have also not been implicated in the corruption that has plagued the ranks. They are not natives in the art of military mutiny.

Knowing this, one is hard pressed to understand why they would venture into surrendering like Erastus's standoff at the Manila Peninsula Hotel, with only their arms to defend their selves, only to surrender without a fight to the police forces sent to arrest them, to just *disappear* under arrest. The true detained officers, together with their fellow officers and security detail, handled one of the most tense standoffs in living memory in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny. They kept no fear of being to arrested. Only a handful of civilian supporters accompanied them in their unarmed walk to the five-star hotel in the heart of the country's financial district. If they were going to be a coup, it was rather amateur if not suicidal. They came virtually without arms.

While they rallied on the Filipino people to join them in their bid to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo, they didn't intend like they were desperately seeking the people's support to push up the crisis they were expressing. If they were thinking on popular mobilization, they they were not they are not only. They should have stretched their stay at the Peninsula till the following day, when the full force of the military were expected. In fact, the possibility was what worried the government forces. So why did Trillanes and Lim give up so quickly?

We can only speculate that their action was meant to spark a mutiny that they thought was coming in the ranks of the military and that when troops marching to the streets or moving in trucks and cheering duke, we are now led to believe that the Magdalo officers lacks resources. In fact, the spokesmen of the Arroyo government has to time to assuring the public that the military chain of command remained intact until but the rebels were totally isolated.

But, if indeed they were alone in this disdained and foolish adventure, how do we explain the fact that, at the height of the standoff, an military's commander, again from the dead of night, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr., came out on with pronouncement to withdraw support for the Arroyo government? Why did the government rely exclusively on police forces to deal with what was openly declared as a bid to remove the existing government? Was Mr. Arroyo afraid that, if compelled to declare their loyalty, a good number of the nation's soldiers might actually side with Lim and Trillanes?

In short, what did the silence of the camps during this an issue range signify? Lumbia if Gen. and Esperon or the former former Perhaps if they were something to all about the scars of mind of the soldiers in the camps even, it might be warning that is likely to put them in deep loss rights in the near four weeks or months. Could this be the real reason for the sudden imposition of a midnight curfew—that they are tightly regulated by the police—and that movements quietly taking place in the coming days?

For it is hard to believe that the soldiers barricaded in their barracks would not care less about what was going on in Makati last Thursday, if they saw what the rest of the police, as well they were ordered, about. I would consider that a meaningful silence, in a time like ours, when images from live media pack more power than the most striking statements, what might the silence of soldiers and soldiers possibly indicate? Are their arrows stressed and their will paralyzed? Or are their souls shaken and outrage awakened to their bound? Who knows?

Who would know what it means for a soldier or a citizen to see a young senator of the land, a man who had served with valor, detained and handcuffed like a sack of potatoes by his captors as he is led to a waiting police bus? Who would know what it means for any viewer to see an 82-year-old prelate of the Church, bedridden by age, his left hand shot at the right knee of another priest, being led to a waiting police bus after having just said a prayer of hope? Who would know what it means for someone to see a whole line of media people, their hands bound in plastic restraints, pushed and shoved into buses, brought to a detention center like cattle for "processing" as suspects? Even were among the most memorable images from Thursday's episode.

I only know that one would need to be blind, deaf, numb and dumb to miss the message as achievements of the rule of law. You take one look at General Lim and Senator Trillanes side by side General Esperon and Colonel Ramos—and you can tell at once who among these soldiers have their heads intact. You take one look at Senator Trillanes and you can tell he is not afraid. The Congress side by side Senator Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye—and you know at once who the liars are.

There is a country in the making not just in the hearts of the people but in the minds of its soldiers, and what it means to take responsibility for the nation our forces bequeathed to us. Thursday are at us a new pitch. We are starting to see what General Lim means when he said: "Unarmed with a person is a romance."

Comment: bodfti_lives@gmail.com

A look at CARP's impact on poverty and growth

GET REAL

Isidro Cabanilla

IT IS THE MOST CAREFUL AND THOROUGH study that I have seen so far on the impact of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) on poverty and growth. And to many, Bigmas redistribution is thus land ownership matters for poverty reduction and growth, and therefore CARP must be extended until its land distribution targets are achieved.

The study, it was funded by the Department of Agrarian Reform will the sure be hard to cast suspicion on its findings, but there can be no doubt about the credibility of Antonio Balisacan, who headed the research team. His colleagues still remember the time when he gave up a high-salaried job with the Asian Development Bank guarding agencies rather than allow it to tell him how to present his findings (which she set jibe with what the bureaucrats or its staff wanted to hear).

As a matter of fact, anyone who reads even just the executive summary of his report, titled "Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Impact Assessment...Study on the Impact of CARP on Poverty reduction and Prospects for Long-Term Growth," will immediately notice that there is no effort to bamboozle over the facts, or to sugarcoat the findings. Right off, he says that 10 years (1998) after the CARP law was passed, less than two-thirds of the program target had been accomplished, and twice succeeding eight years (as of end-November 2006), the rate of distribution had clearly slowed down because only another 20 percent of the target had been achieved.

Worse, he points out that only 10 percent of the private lands under compulsory acquisition (other than new and some lands) have actually been covered to date (based as of end December 2006). And as if that were not bad enough, he also points out that many of the lands (23 percent) already distributed are still not individually titled.

What this means is that most private landowners, representing 42 percent of the lands that should have been given to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), are still holding on to their land 20 years after the law was passed. The argument runs is that landowners, having successfully stayed off the compulsory land transfer that the CARP law has ordered, since it is a disincentive to invest in new crops or keep their land. It is also true that 31 percent of the ARBs are operating their farms with one arm and figuratively behind their backs. Many of them still have individual titles, so only are the insecure effects of ownership not present, the farmers also have difficulty getting credit and are more prone to selling their rights or abandoning their lands.

But having made short shrift of the so-called multisectoral evaluation of CARP in order to land distribution is concerned, Balisacan and his assessors go down to brass tacks, studying the impact of CARD i.e., whether it has improved the quality of life or the welfare of the ARBs. And the short answer is yes (and no, and yes).

How did Balisacan go about doing he study? He used census and survey data including the 1990 and 2000 Census of Populations and Housing, the 1991 and 2003 Census of Agriculture, as well as the Family Income and Expenditure Survey, the Labor Force Survey, and the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey, plus data from the Bureau of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development, the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, and the National Statistical Coordination Board. Choosing certain critical municipalities and non-recipient landowners of welfare, he compared the performances of program beneficiaries in barangays that were Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs)...what he called the treatment group—with the performances of farmers living in the hinterland of non-ARC) called the control group. Roughly 3,000 barangays were studied, divided evenly between the treatment group and the control group.

Some of the findings: Overall, the proportion of recipient farmers who are ARBs is high, at 60 to 70 in non-ARCs, while there is a decrease in the number of economic facilities in both sets of barangays, the reduction was large as in the non-ARC barangays, while there is an increase in the number of barangays with agricultural cooperatives and producers' associations, the ARCs had a higher increment, indicating better access to markets.

Other noteworthy findings: In 1998, the per capita expenditure in ARC barangays was lower than in non-ARCs, but by 2003 the former, in 2000, both figures had increased, with per capita expenditures higher in the former than in the latter. Also in the same period of time, non-monetary indicators of welfare, as demonstrated by housing materials (e.g., strong roof, strong walls) and ownership of consumer durables (e.g., televisors, households in ARCs showed slightly better performance than those in non-ARCs.

More significantly for policy purposes, though, are the findings that per capita expenditure, per capita income, and per capita net farm incomes of farmers living in barangays with ARCs are significantly higher than their counterparts who do not own land. This shows unambiguously the importance of ownership or control of the land in determining increases of farmers' incomes. It also found that the odds that a household is not poor is higher by between 1.8 and 2.6 times than the odds that it will be poor, if it owns land...again reinforcing the importance of land ownership.

For poverty reduction and higher income growth, CARP is crucial. That is Balisacan's message. Congress should hear it loud and clear.

Walking 1,600 km for social justice

SIXTY-WEEK-JUNKIE-TO-FIGHTER—13 OF THOSE women... will trade Manila in a quest for social justice, after walking more than 1,600 kilometers from the west coast of Mindanao to Malacañang, starting Jan Dec. 10. They regularly walked about 30 kms a day, but on treks 25 and 34 km to avoid being stranded in flooded areas. Their aim is to be at Malacañang on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day.

The walkers are asserting their right as tillers to 144 hectares of prime agricultural land in San Hermen, Surallan, by virtue of a Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) issued to them in 1989 under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

Delays, delays, delays. To create CARP-covered land, landowner Norberto Quirantting ended by preparing to convert the land to an agro-industrial resort having a development academy subsidiary, a golf course, a residential subdivision, a tourist development complex, agro-industrial park, forest development facilities, 360-room hotel, restaurant, golf course, housing projects, etc., where all present to be farm-privileged farmers before land-use conversion is approved by the DAR. When the farmers threatened mass protests in front of the DAR, Quirantting ended by promising to convert the land to an agro-industrial zone. Carlos Pedro Quirantting is now appealed to the Office of the President, and farmers Secretary Ruben Torres approved the conversion proposal in 1996.

To reverse the Torres decision, in 2007 the farmers went to court, waited for the 20 days, and President Fidel V. Ramos issued a so-called "writ-writ" solution awarding 130 hectares to the farmers and 44 hectares to Quirantting. But PVPs for Justice was elevated to the Supreme Court, which ruled (through the Second Division, on April 24, 1998) that the Torres decision could not be reversed, or a withdrawal of the filing of Motion for Reconsideration by the DAR. While the farmers and the DAR filed their Motion for Reconsideration, the Supreme Court's Second Division (Justice Josue N. Bellosillo, chairperson; Justice Jose Melo; Justice Leonardo Quisumbing; Justice Santiago Kapunan; and Justice Reynato Puno) swung in favor of the farmers.

Social Climate

Marlowe Mangudadatu

Although the conversion proposal had been given the nod of the Supreme Court, Quirantting did not in fact implement it within the required five years, and instead, in 2002, sold the land to San Miguel Foods Inc. which moved to make it into a piggery. Citing the violation of the terms of the conversion, on Nov. 3, 2004 the farmers petitioned the DAR to cancel it. After nine years, the DAR confirmed (Oct. 27, 2006) that the conversion had not been done — there was no development academy, etc. However, the DAR let on pursuit the land to the Office of the President (OP) by claiming that OP took jurisdiction over since the 1998 Torres decision.

This year, the farmers elevated their petition (Jan. 22, 2007) to the OP, and on the same day (Oct. 3, 2007) on the claim that the farmers lack profitability to sell for it, but two months ago (Aug. 14, 2007) it reminded the case was to the DAR for execution. It took another week for the DAR to reconsider the initial (Nov. 22, 2006). The DAR farmers are now awaiting the DAR's decision on their reconsider. (c) a Court and Dimler Order on the conversion of the land into a piggery, and (b) a Bureau of Corrections' request to the Secretary of Justice to transfer land to beneficiaries under CARP.

The Quirantting farmers have a strong case. They are supported by many advocacy groups, including many in the Catholic hierarchy. They got help from many sympathizers, including Negros Occ Bishop Vicente Navarro, all along their walk. Their legal counsel includes the Bayanihan Mediation Center (Bayanihan), the Bayanihan Legal Assistance Foundation (BALGAS), based at the Ateneo de Manila University.

Agrarian reform is a slow process. The Agricultural Land Reform Code of 1963 aimed to abolish share tenancy—though proportional sharing between landowner and tenant—but began only in Operation Land Transfer in 1972 provided for men and rare others to become owners over a 15-year period. The CARP since 1989, covers all crops, which makes sense, though in fact on the eve of 2008 is not completed. The result is widespread poverty in rural farmers.

The continuation of serious agrarian unrest shows that agricultural reform is incomplete—as it is incomplete in Mexico, even after a hundred years. To give up on agrarian reform is like giving up on democracy altogether, particularly because we are in fact the poorest countries in the world.

* * *

My first personal experience in doing a survey was in 1973, involving 207 rice farmers in Nueva Ecija, the pilot province of land reform. The results ("Nueva Ecija: Gateway to the Countryside of Tomorrow Change" (by myself, E.A. Rivadeo, and E. P. de los Reyes, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1974) found that owner-operators, share tenants, and land-lease tenants are equally productive. Share operators are the least-off farmers; they have not moved in the past.

In late 1986, when I was Aquino consultant on land reform, in a meeting with President Corazon Aquino, Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo, and Secretary General Minister Mondejar, Arroyo asked me how much would the land reform program cost. In response one of the estimated multi-billion peso cost of comprehensive agrarian reform. My reply of "None" and that we should be satisfied if productivity did not decline despite the agrarian reform aimed more schools and, later, she retorted, "There we will be dressing our money down a third hole!" I responded that the government would be spending merely money rather than blood, to solve the perennial problem of agrarian unrest.

* * *

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Hero worship

Commentary

Eugenia Duran-Apostol

WHO ARE HERE TODAY TO HONOR US DEITIES guided men and women, whom we recognize as heroes and martyrs of our country.

Their names are engraved in the wall of Bantayog ng mga Bayani, Quezon Ave., Quezon City: Marti-ing Ondoy, Wilfredo Garcia, Emilio Aquino, Edgar Aquino, Rhoda Santamaria, Carlos Nang, Emmanuel Yap, Jose Bulatao, Joaquin Nacro, Lorenzo Tañada, Jose Diokno, Serafin Aun, Lorenzo Ortigas, Claudio Teehankee, Cirilos Salazar, Jovito Salonga, Jaime Cardinal Sin, Corazon Aquino, Jose Maria Sison, Raul Manglapus, Jacobo Clave, Renato Constantino, Jaime Ongpin, Antonio Trillo, Alfredo Mahe, Jose Rizal, Paul Bilibid, Augusto Sumbol, Jaime Sin, Andres Bonifacio, Apolinario Mabini, Gregorio del Pilar, Melchora Aquino, Gabriela Silang, Josefa Llanes Escoda, Raul Roco, Nick Joaquin and Marcelo Jhon.

These modern-day heroes fought Marcos' martial-crimes designed to perpetuate himself in power. Today we are relatively free of military abuse because of their sacrifices, and the restoration of democracy. The climate is gone, but governments remain abusive and in sufficient due suffering predominates among the poor and the future looks bleak and worrisome.

Because anything we can do about the situation? We cannot but hope. We shouldn't.

We have to do something positive for our future. I say, for starters to have some friends who think not for me it is education.

In 2003, the Presidential Ad Hoc Committee on Youth Affairs (PACY) under the chairperson of the Board of Trustees—launched a national advocacy called The Education Revolution. Together with various experts from education, business, government, the academe and the development community, they took a long hard look at the state of education today.

We learned that the achievement gap between the 20 richest public school pupils and students and the formidable few whose parents can afford the tuition of high quality private schools is as wide that those two groups of learners might as well be living in different countries.

What exactly constitutes to quality education? Does it refer to physical facilities, such as well-stocked and brightly lit classrooms? Or does quality education pertain to the proficiency of teachers in their subject?

How about the parents and the community who for decades have been left out? They are now forced the constituents to foster learning outcomes and to monitoring passive social values in our youth.

Less than ten percent of all Grade 6 pupils managed to score a 75 percent passing mark in subjects such as English (i.e., English, Science, Math, Filipino and Values or Social Studies). The public high school students fared much worse, registering an achievement average of a little over 45 percent. The dropout rate is highest at Grades 1 to 2 due to economic reasons, more recently and parents lose.

Their teachers are equally handicapped. It is common for high school teachers to handle subjects other than those they majored in. Grade school teachers have to contend with really large class sizes in cramped classrooms.

To further aggravate matters, our best teachers have steadily been migrating to lucrative paying jobs overseas.

The PRRMP launched the Education Revolution in 2002 to address these core programs, summed up by the Ateneo Alliance of Social Scientists and Innovators. Both programs draw from the lessons of the People Power. The Local Education Alliance has a simplified mobilization module to enable communities to arrive at an organized and consistent approach to raise the education quality of their public schools.

The blossoming the literacies program, meanwhile combines highly interactive instructional sessions with deeply intensive workshops on active learning and learning strategies, including the emphasis on how to manage better home plans and test construction and measurement.

Today, after five years, the People Power dictator of the Education Revolution has finally taken root.

The Local Education Alliance is now a cornerstone of the 17.7% Movement headed by the powerful League of Corporate Foundations and the Philippine Business of Education. The 17.7% movement seeks to make education improvement a national priority by many factors from the basic supporting people to make it a passing 75 percent within five years.

The sharpening the literacies program has evolved equally well. It now has an improved professional skills improvement module and it is developed its learning to be learner.

Mentoring the Masters aims to draw in progressive principals who have mentored their role as instructional leaders of their schools and to foster a culture of education quality among new school heads.

The gains that the PRRMP has made so far are just a proverbial drop in the bucket. To really make a difference, we have to reach into the hearts itself of us, join the three ordinary men and women did to their cities.

* * *

Excerpts from remarks delivered by Eugenia Duran-Apostol at the unveiling of the Martyrs and Heroes for 2007 at the Bantayog ng Mga Bayani, 4th Avenue is the founding chair of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power.

The Alston Report: the challenge to gov't

EARLIER THIS WEEK, PHILIP ALSTON, THE United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, released his final report on the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. Consistent with Alston's earlier public pronouncements on the issue, the report concluded that responsibility for most of the killings, particularly those of leftist activists, could be laid on the doorstep of the military.

According to the report, these unconditional executions were carried out as part of a military counter-insurgency strategy which targets leaders and members of "front" organizations of the CPP-NPA. The "ultimate foes" of the AFP that the killings were the result of internal military tactics like the Order of the Commander in his group was dismissed as being "strikingly unconvincing."

The report, however, did not stop there. While dismissing the military's theory of internal purge, it nonetheless exonerated the responsibility of the CPP-NPA for some extrajudicial executions, most notably the murder of civilians under the guise of "revolutionary justice," and the killing of persons in the course of agrarian reform disputes. The report was just as critical in its characterizing these CPP-NPA killings as being clear violations of international law.

Responses to the report have been far from being predictable lines. A spokesperson for the President was quick to deny that there was an official "policy" supporting the killings. The Philippine Mission (PMG) arguably believed that the report was merely an "opinion" and that any of its findings should be supported by "evidence which could stand in a court of law." On the other side, the party-list groups Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela immediately called for the sacking of top military officials for their culpability in the killings, while remaining silent on the report's eminently less substantive of the CPP-NPA.

Commentary

Harris M. Gutierrez III

Initial reactions fail to adequately grasp the purpose and full import of the Alston report

These initial reactions, analyzed as they are on the muted political interests of those various groups, fail to adequately grasp the purpose and full import of the Alston report.

To begin with, the principal objective of a report by a special rapporteur is to assess a state's compliance with its legal obligations in a given area under international law. Hence, the report opens with an enumeration of applicable treaties that the Philippines has ratified, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Geneva Conventions. These form the legal basis for Philippine obligations with respect to the issue of extrajudicial killings.

These obligations, relying on a familiar matrix, are those to respect, protect and fulfill, in this specific case the rights of persons to life and to judicial process. The obligation to "respect" requires government to refrain from engaging in international killings. The obligation to "protect" requires government to prevent third parties, whether vigilantes or armed insurgents, from doing the same. The obligation to "fulfill" compels government to put in place the necessary mechanisms, such as courts, distinct with adequate powers, to ensure the enjoyment of the rights.

Under this framework, it does not matter if government chooses formally adopt a policy condoning the killings; it will it is in breach of its obligations as long as the killings are perpetrated by its agents, in this case the military, and it fails to take appropriate actions to stop them and enforce liability on the perpetrators.

Similarly, as the report is concerned with the larger issue of state complicity, it should not be characterized in the same manner as a criminal investigation. Insistence on the report following the formal rules of evidence observed by the courts is misplaced, since what is at issue is not individual criminal liability but rather the responsibility of state action with respect to its obligations under international human rights law.

The fairness or validity of the report, rather, should be assessed by the methodology used in gathering the information on which it was based. In the case of the Alston report, it was anchored on extensive interviews from the government, military and civil society, as well as documents provided by those same groups. In other words, its conclusions came after the weighing of information from various, ostensibly contradictory sources.

That the report paints a grim picture of the Philippine situation cannot be denied. But rather than viewing it as a public relations dilemma that has to be "handled" or dismissed, government should take note of the challenges of acting on the recommendations set forth in the report. After all, Alston's investigation was done at the behest of the Philippine government itself; it stood to the height of obviousness, not to mention unwise, for the government to dismiss the unfavorable findings it sought.

Harris M. Gutierrez III is director of the UP Institute of Human Rights.

A boulevard's charm

WHEN I WAS ABOUT 7 OR 8 YEARS OLD, EVERY DAY my parents would take us, me and my siblings, to Roxas Boulevard for early morning walks.

Secretary Avenida walked along the seemingly endless, paved seawall, we kids would try, with little success, to keep up with their pace, even as we took pleasure in watching other people who, like us, were functioning in the boulevard's charm—lovers who watched silhouettes to everyone else around them; dog walkers wary of those who were afraid of dogs; old people barely able to move at all with their every step; and children with earphones, listening to their favorite tunes.

Young Blood

Alvin Clyde G. Gregorio

We seem to frame what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the [illegible] and below. Mail your [illegible].

Back then, this was how my day started and, young as I was, I would not complain when my father would nudge me from slumber and make me and my siblings prepare for that early morning ritual. I remember that as a young boy, I was enthralled and totally captivated by the beauty of the first wonder of light breaking off the horizon and the rising sun.

Real Boulevard beckoned to everyone as a place to get ready for, or as a momentary escape from, a stressful day. The cold morning breeze, which permeated with the sun and the bustling sounds of early morning dew, was always inviting to my senses and made me face the new day with much zest and optimism.

I remember that the boulevard was the first place that my first girlfriend and I went to for our first date. Being as we were then, are more concerned time our relationship was for keeps and—corny as it may sound—that we would be eternally spend the rest of our lives together. The boulevard provided a most picturesque backdrop as a love story that was slowly unfolding. I remember the golden shades of dusk taking over the skies over our heads as we talked about how our life's journey would be. She would be a doctor and I would be a lawyer in Paris or New Zealand, perhaps. And, back then, we sincerely believed that this was our destiny meant. Perhaps, it was the intoxicating, newly discovered feeling which led us to believe in the folly of a perfect relationship. Or it could have been the boulevard's calmy which made us forget temporarily and feel in love. Whatever that was love would transcend the physical plane, that once was a love ethereal and, more than that, magical.

It did not, however, take long for me to realize that we were just blinded by the intensity of our infatuation. We broke up, mutually, after a few months—not because we disagreed with that the ideal partner does not exist in this world. After excessive bouts of petty quarrels and endless disputes over the most trivial things, we finally decided to end our relationship.

In anguish over my first heartbreak, I invited my classmates to a drinking spree in the boulevard. That's the beginning, if I recall correctly, and that's the cause why the excessive intake of alcohol, the boulevard then, to me, had become cold and abusive. It only fanned the feeling of despair inside me.

But that is how I came to the realization that life and love are never automatic—and that one from an orientation there "broken" does something.

In November last year, I was back to the boulevard where I spent a lot of interesting and refreshing, which had happened more than fearful night of heavy drinking, when a group of young boys foolishly believed that Tuesday 67 was a matter of confidence. And I have awakened to the reality that life is what you make of it.

As the final rays of the setting sun yielded to the entrance of the early evening's shadows, I thought deep love what I have done with my life. I had squandered time yourself in an university that taught me that academics and personal development are paramount, that most of the latter can actually make you lose your focus and direction in life.

The boulevard was my place of consolation when I felt that my life had lost all semblance of meaning. It was where I chose to reflect the beginnings of my broken self and commit some my mistakes so I can learn. It was where I realized that change is never too late, and that, yes, failures do come to make clearer our vision of how our lives ought to be.

The boulevard for me, as with everyone else who grew up in this city, has been a common source of comforts. People come here to seek a breather from their routines of everyday living, to celebrate happy occasions with family members and friends, and as lovers, to begin stories anew.

But more than anything else, the boulevard taught me that although life is a constant struggle, the turbulence is never permanent, that the seemingly unsolvable problems are occasionally successful there—merely serve to redefine our perspectives and make us see the grander schema of things. That although life and love are besieged by countless storms, we can, through our many ways, make ourselves complete—because life, as with everything else, goes on.

Alvin Clyde G. Gregorio, 23, is a full-year political science student at Silliman University in Dumaguete City.

In The News

Sen. Manuel Roxas II

LETTERS

Proposal for a happy and humane Christmas

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE ITEM "Stop[illegible] meat call for Christmas," (Inquirer, 11/19/07) [illegible] by a group that [illegible] meat—even a delicious vegetarian feast and great calves something to the merry-making.

Each year, cows and calves are killed for Christmas. Before ending up in the holiday entrepreneurs, gentle calves are taken from their mothers immediately after birth and reared to an to deliberately induce [illegible] anemia. The calves are denied their basic needs, including access to their mother's milk and access to pasture and exercise, and are often restrained to make movement so that their flesh [illegible] tender. They spend [illegible] months packed tightly in [illegible] stalls, reared in their own waste.

Calves confined to veal crates, which usually measure two feet wide, cannot turn or stand, stretch their limbs, or even lie down comfortably. Scientific research indicates that calves confined to these crates experience "chronic stress" and require approximately five times more medication than calves living in more spacious conditions. It is not surprising, then, that veal meat is among the most likely meat to contain illegal drug residues, which pose a threat to human health. Veal calves are also more that calves exhibit abnormal coping behaviors associated with frustration, including head-tossing and shaking, licking, sucking and stereotypical chewing behavior. Confined calves experience leg and joint disorders and their ability to walk is impaired.

During slaughter, calves are being upside-down for 24 hours to drain their blood. They are conscious when their throats are slit. No painkillers are used during these agonizing procedures.

Please, help make animal suffering a thing of Christmas past.

Visit [illegible] cute or darling cow for [illegible] festive vegetarian recipes, and have a happy and humane holiday.

—ROCHELLE REGERON,
campaigns manager
People for the Ethical Treatment
of Animals Asia-Pacific Pvt Ltd.
Rochelle@PETAAsiaPacific.com

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BAZAAR	DATES	VENUE	CONTACT
[illegible]	Nov. 30 Dec. 1-2, 8-9, 15-16, 21-23	SMX Tent, The Fort, Taguig	572-4800/519-2784
[illegible]	Nov. 30, Dec. 1-2	Century Court, Ayala Alabang	848-0148/807-3267
[illegible]	Dec. 1	Intex on Wheels, Makati	751-7860
[illegible]	Dec. 1	Cocobod Center, Cebu Pkwy.	416-4611/417-1680
[illegible]	Dec. 1	Ayala Alabang Village Market	807-2611
[illegible]	Dec. 1	Multinational Village Parañaque	822-4807
[illegible]	Dec. 1	Century Court, Ayala Alabang	807-2611
[illegible]	Dec. 1	Greenhills, Harbour Point	
[illegible]	Dec. 1	Intex on Wheels, Makati	751-7860
[illegible]	Dec. 1-2	Greenhills, Harbour Point	
[illegible]	Dec. 1-2	Century Court, Ayala Alabang	807-2611
[illegible]	Dec. 1-2	Greenhills, Harbour Point	
[illegible]	Dec. 1-2	Intex on Wheels, Makati	751-7860

Trying to make sense out of it all

From page A1

the 2001 withdrawals of military support which terminated President Estrada's presidency? Both Lim and Trillanes are trained military officers and it is hard to imagine that they as disciplined commissioned officers, I shall be referring of the Catholic bishops who joined them.

Long-term investment

I say, however, are this failed coup. Just as a long-term investment for the future. The public reaction, visible in the rising disappointment with the events used by Trillanes and Lim, showed a widespread desire for an end to corruption that has weighed down the current administration. Official, domestic dents and outrider the public that the current administration is doing enough to make the involved correctives. But modes do not achieve solutions. Yesterday's unfortunate might yet bear fruit.

What of the police reaction to the situation? It was clear from the speed with which the Manila Peninsula was secured that police authorities have learned that protracted negotiations can only do more damage. They decided to cut quickly but did they cut cleanly?

Constitutional shortcuts

Recent Supreme Court cases have made it very clear that an emergency situations, even if it is declared by the President (and one was not declared this time) does not grant greater powers to the executive arm than what it has in normal situations. It does not authorize constitutional shortcuts. In this connection we must look at two actions taken by government: the seizure of media premises and the imposition of curfew.

In arrest in general terms is a deprivation of liberty for the purpose of making a person answer for an offense. One can quibble about words and call what was done to media priod/detention/"invitation for processing," but ironically, in spite of the protestations after that one brought to a police station by invitation is already covered by the constitutional protections for persons under custodial investigation. Besides, an invitation may be declined. This was not the case with the media men and women. They were not only herded into vans against their wishes but were even cuffed while being brought to Bicutan. In short, they were (grammatically) arrested.

No warrant of arrest

The basic rule is that no person may be deprived of liberty without due process of law. Due process requires that no person may be arrested without a warrant of arrest issued by a judge except in those instances where warrantless arrests are constitutionally allowed. I am assuming that there was no warrant for the arrest of the media people. Was this a case of a justifiable warrantless arrest?

What immediately comes to my mind is the exception covering the arrest of persons caught in flagrante delicto, that is, caught in the act of committing a crime. What crime were the media people committing? The police officers themselves did not know and so they were brought to Bicutan to verify whether they were committing a crime. In other words, about first, ask questions later!

Another thing which comes to my mind is what is called in jurisprudence a "stop and frisk situation." An experienced police officer is allowed to stop and frisk a person for the purpose if verifying if a person acting in a suspicious manner is in possession of a dangerous weapon. But this also is not the case.

Error corrected

I will say nothing about freedom of expression because I happen to believe that media people do not have more freedom of expression than ordinary persons. They are more prone to having their rights violated but they do not have a superior freedom of expression. But we should look into what the police did with their equipment and other materials, if anything at all.

The President herself must have seen the error of the situation and acted accordingly by giving the institution that the processing must be expedited. And it was. I hope a lesson was learned.

Curfew

Let me also say something about the imposition of curfew.

Basically curfew is a limitation on freedom of movement. It is interesting to note that the 1987 Bill of Rights tightened the protection on the freedom of movement. It now says "freedom shall (the right to cannot be impaired) except in the interest of national security, public safety or public health." This was the old provision. The 1986 Constitutional Commission added the phrase "as may be provided by law" in order to limit executive discretion by requiring that the limitation be done in accordance with an existing law whether general or specific. Thus, for instance, there is a law allowing curfew of still from the country under certain circumstances.

I am not sure if there is a law covering the imposition of curfew. At any rate, the problem of last night's curfew has become moored by the ticking of the clock.

Cameraman arrested not once, but twice

From page A1

on ABS-CBN cameraman had a brush with the police—not just once, but twice.

After characterizing day of coverage, Nadres in Caloocan was apprehended at a police checkpoint on the way home Thursday night.

Checkpoints were set up all over Metro Manila on Thursday following the Philippine Marine's declaration of a state of emergency at midnight to Saturday.

Members of the press who remained inside the Peninsula Hotel in Makati City along with the Magdalo soldiers were invited by the police for questioning, causing consternation of a media crackdown.

Cabuplan had just come from detention and was dropped off at the ABS-CBN to get his car. He was on his way home to Bright Point Subdivision on Mindanao Avenue when he noticed that his car's rear tires needed air. He decided to go to a gasoline station on Timog Avenue near the Tomas Morato avenue rotunda.

"I was circling the rotunda when I saw a police checkpoint. The cop asked me where I was going. I said I needed to pump some air in my tires. He saw my ABS-CBN ID card and let me go," Cabuplan told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

The brief cameos over thought he was off the hook—or so he thought. It was a few minutes past 2 a.m.

Another checkpoint

A few meters away was another checkpoint which he thought would allow him to pass since the previous checkpoint had just cleared him.

A policeman shouted, "Move! Move!" Cabuplan pulled over to the side of the road.

"P—mo," a policeman cursed him. "Move di mo bo ako sa in (Didn't you see me)?"

Although the shouted him his ABS-CBN ID card and his driver's license, the policeman demanded to see his car registration.

However, Cabuplan was unable to retrieve the papers since the hitch of his dashboard compartment was broken.

So off he went to the nearby Kamuning police station on Edsa, escorted by police cars from the second checkpoint.

"I called ABS-CBN and was advised by Rupert Mejid (network staff) to just go to the station and someone would go there to help me," Cabuplan said.

At the station, he was met by ABS-CBN TV reporter Cecelbeth Mallari who advised him to "brush the look of his companions and produce the papers."

Holed up with Trillanes

"Pinaawa na ito na dapat mabuksan yung papel. Tapos ni-log na lang sa blotter yung incidents (I heard the commissioned open to get the papers. Then they logged the incident to the blotter)," Cabuplan related.

Mercifully, he was not detained and was finally able to go home at around 3 a.m.

Cabuplan was part of the team of TV broadcaster Ces Drilon. During the standoff, they were holed up in a room on the second floor of the hotel along with Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

"I was the one recording footage of [Trillanes'] a few minutes before we were removed by the police," he said.

Harassment

The way the assault teams treated the journalists, Cabuplan said, was something short of harassment.

"They shouted at us: 'P— ng—, sundo pala dat! Isan kamay (So you're media! Hands to the air)," he narrated, adding that they were ordered to drop to their knees and raise their arms although the room was overflowing with people.

They were huddled together outside the hotel entrance for another 20 minutes before they were loaded into a bus bound for Bicutan, the trip lasting more than an hour.

The ABS-CBN crew was "processed" and then allowed to go home after Chot Villa, the network's head of news operations, and some lawyers talked to police investigators confirming the reporters' identities.

GRIEVING ETHEL: Bishop Emerlou Julio Labayen (center) of Infanta, Quezon, is released Friday afternoon from detention at Camp Crame in the custody of Bishop Rolando Tirona (left) at the house of Cardinal Rosales.

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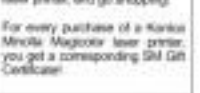

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INQUIRER Visayas

Volcano scare in Biliran

By Rolando O. Bevintag
Naval, Biliran

BIRAN IS A VOLCANIC ISLAND, BUT there was nothing panicky about this fact until a local official allegedly predicted a volcanic eruption here after a recent earthquake.

Last Oct. 28, at 6:15 a.m., an intensity 4.4 earthquake shook the vicinity of Biliran province and nearby towns. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) located its epicenter at San Sebastian's southeast of Naval town.

It was actually the second earthquake on the same day in Eastern Visayas. A few hours earlier, at 2:21 a.m., an earthquake of similar intensity shook the province of Northern Samar, with its epicenter located 50 km southeast of Catarman.

The Phivolcs reported that these multiquakes were tectonic in origin. That is, they were caused by the shifting or movement of the earth's crust. (The other cause is volcanic, triggered by the underground forces of a volcano, including eruption.)

In the case of Biliran, the possible source of the recent earthquake was the Leyte segment of the Philippine Fault Zone. Its depth of focus or 30-km underground was classified as "shallow."

Some have reportedly left the area, after allegedly selling cheap their livestock and farm lots, to settle elsewhere while the perceived danger remained

MT PAMPAMAO in Biliran Island. Erupted in 1641, it is now dormant.

Dire prediction

Two days later, Maria A. del Rosario Jr., a councilor of Naval who hosts a noon block-time program in the local Radyo Natin FM station, allegedly claimed on air that the earthquake signaled an impending eruption of the volcano in Biliran.

Feedback from radio listeners and blog exchanges in an Internet forum for Filipinos now have it that the eruption was supposedly here occurred last Nov. 15 or 17.

Del Rosario reportedly alleged that a mysterious, hermit-like old man with dire dark prediction requested him to broadcast his hunch to the public. He did not name this source.

Then an aftershock shook Naval at about 7 a.m. on Oct. 31. This time, the earthquake caused a climate of fear and uncertainty that spread among local people who had heard the radio broadcast.

Some reportedly gripped the residents of several upland barangays around Libtong-an east of Naval near the present mouth of the only active volcano in Eastern Visayas. Some have reportedly left the area after allegedly selling cheap their livestock and farm lots, to settle elsewhere while the perceived danger remained.

The rumors and speculations soon took a life of their own and spilled into the Internet, in the www.bilirantalent.com and the Biliran-on-Line Internet websites.

Concerned and skeptical residents sought official verification of the rumors from their local politicians. Some sought the help of Biliran Gov. Rogelio Espina, but he was out of the country reportedly on a yacht cruise in the US.

Others spoke talk-of-town text messages to Biliran Rep. Glenn A. Chong. He has referred the issue to the Phivolcs, which officials promised to send personnel and equipment to monitor the status of the volcano in Biliran.

Chong likewise appealed for calm and asked any among his constituents on Biliran, by an Internet blog, he chided Del Rosario for his "irresponsible" statements on radio that had caused panic among the local residents.

However, Del Rosario has denied making a baseless alleged volcanic eruption.

"What information is a hatchback of dirty politics purposely intend to damage my person," he said in a text message to the Inquirer.

In a telephone interview, Michael Agustin, the manager of Radyo Natin Naval, denied having heard Del Rosario's controversial broadcast. Except he said there are no tapes that he has yet to check. He said he has no control over the content of block-time programs.

But a staff of the Philippine Information Agency in Biliran, who requested anonymity, admitted having heard the broadcast on that Del Rosario was on one duty.

Volcanic history

Many modern Biliranons became aware of the volcano in their midst only after the catastrophic eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in Zambales on June 1991. In its wake, Phivolcs published reports that Biliran Island has the least active volcano in Eastern Visayas.

In subsequent years, this writer established from historical documents that at least volcanic eruptions in the Leyte-Samar region over the past 350 years, three occurred on different mountains of Biliran Island.

The earliest eruption occurred in 1740 in Mt. Cantocoy, north of old Cabucon, now comprising the towns of San Juan and St. Bernard, Southern Leyte. The latter town became unreasonably famous last year because of the Guinsaugon landslide, which buried at least a thousand residents.

The Global Volcanism Program (GVP) of the Smithsonian Institution in the US has identified the volcano in Biliran with the code number 0702-08. It is classified as a compound volcano, with several mountains as possible vents for eruption.

Geologists have various classifications of volcanic types. One is "Surtseyan," and another is "subhospitalpical." The volcano in Biliran is classified as historical, that is, documented during or shortly after observation, with its last known eruption dated Sept. 26, 1939.

The GVP website has it that the summit elevation of this volcano is 1,300 m. on its shield; is 11.5233°N or 11°31'24"N, and its longitude is 124.535°E or 124°32'6"E.

The description has this basic data: in the GVP website: in Cadasan terms, the tallest peak southeast of the island, which became dormant after 1939.

An unnamed Internet blogger has it that the 1939 eruption was from the crater and that it caused an avalanche of debris and 0.31 cm. thick ashfall at Cabucon and adjoining areas.

Previous eruptions

The two previous eruptions of the volcano in Biliran are classified as "anthropological," that is, described in native legends.

Mt. Pamanco is the first known volcano in Biliran, located southeast of the island. This was described as eruptive by Juan de Penneiro Alcina, who wrote in 1668 that he had "often seen the mountains on the island of Pamanco [still name of Biliran] throwing out fire, especially on very dark and stormy nights."

This volcano presumably erupted in 1469, a year marked by "a rain of ashes" in Cebu, about 130 km away. Its massive devastation presumably influenced the natives to change the name of the province to read from Pamanco to Biliran, probably persisted on the folk belief that this could stop the bad spirits in the destructive volcano.

Mt. Pamanco has been dormant since then.

The second eruption was said to have occurred in 1666. A petition in 1695 submitted to a local friar surrounding the politicoreligious transfer of Cadacan mentioned that the inhabitants experienced for two hours a volcanic eruption of the mountain in front of Tinago (village and river), which had been throwing fire from its crater. In the course hours of time, and with some horror, they saw rocks flying out of the crater and landing in the distances.

The crater of this volcano was apparently in the present Libtong Thermal Area in central Biliran, comprising of one building pool and several hot springs. It is in the southeast of Mt. Pamanco and 8 km southwest of Naval, Biliran.

The adjacent slope of the mountain ridge facing Cadacan is known as Pulang Tipa (red soil), a key source of sulfur during the Spanish era.

The historical volcanic eruptions in Biliran in 1666, 1880 and 1939 present a problem that such event occurs on the island every 130 years or so. Thus, the next eruption could possibly happen decades from now in 2069, but not in 2007.

Funny

Del Rosario's alleged prophecy of doom mentioned the deaths of thousands of people in case of a volcanic eruption.

But no such thing happened during the last volcanic event in Biliran in 1939. Instead, there was a funny anecdote about it.

It tells in the Tormoso family of Tucdolan, who came from Cadacan. See if that when the massive volcano erupted, the family members rushed out of their houses with few belongings, you and president Roosevelt Jr. inside a hand-spot (a large earthen pot used by travel dishes).

After everybody was accounted for, the family head shouted, "Large! Lot's get!"

Only after the ashes rain gone did they realize that the host was still stuck high up in the branch. Three pairs gave way to four.

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Across the NATION

Army arrests NDF peace panel head

By Miko Dizon in Manila and Dotto Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—ARMED Forces Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon yesterday announced the arrest of a top communist leader, an arrest that was condemned by the National Democratic Front.

The AFP said Elizabeth Principe, chair of the NDF peace panel in the crisis-hobbled talks with the government, was seized at 11:20 a.m. in Calauag by eight government agents.

Esperon tagged Principe as the secretary general of the CPP-New People's Army (NPA) who has an extensive record of terrorist bombings and murder charges.

Esperon said Principe, 56, was arrested in Calauag on Nov. 28.

Luis Jalandoni and Principe married with two children and resident of Bonggabong, Barrio Ilaya, is protected by the GPH-NDFP Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (Jasig) as an NDF consultant in peace negotiations with the government.

Lorena Siroles, Principe's daughter, told the Inquirer in a phone interview that her mother was abducted contrary to the military's claim.

"They dragged her into a vehicle without showing her of her rights," Siroles said.

Siroles said her mother had just seen a doctor for a medical examination when she was arrested along 8 Tayabas Avenue in front of Ali Mall.

Principe's husband, Leo Velasco, a suspected CPP/NPA leader, was abducted in Bulacan on 16 Cupertino De Dios.

Velasco is still missing for two years, Siroles said.

In a phone interview, military spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said Principe was arrested by the Army's 5th Infantry Division Search on the wanted list since

The 5th ID is based in Camp Isaiah.

The Isiro human rights group Karapatan Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights) has recorded 869 extrajudicial killings and 180 cases of forced disappearances since Ms. Arroyo took power in 2001. HERE a report from the case during in Manila

RAINCOATS FOR HORSES Pony boys in Bugallon City need to make a killing as the holiday season draws near in the summer capital, but not this time. The riders buried cheer to wrap their valuable horses with make-shift raincoats until the weather brings them rainwaters.

No Gloria, no Nayong Pilipino opening at Clark

CLARK FREEPORT—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo canceled her visit to the Nayong Pilipino at Clark at the Expo Pilipino there on Friday, prompting officials to call off the inaugural event.

An "unexpected last-minute" tur the so-called rebellion in Makati City, was behind the change in schedule, according to Cris Caldong, coordinator of the government-led Nayong Pilipino Foundation.

"The board advised the Pryadent not to come because bad weather was expected in the area," Caldong said. It was supposed to Clark on Friday morning, though.

"In fact, the President wanted to push through with the opening," he said.

She was supposed to lead the first scheduled at 10 a.m.

The Nayong Pilipino at Clark occupies 13 hectares in the 60-hectare Expo Pilipino. It covers the pre-colonial and colonial phase of the Expo, which the former administration built before the commercial of Philippines independence in 1998.

The foundation spent P40 million to improve the place and put in new attractions.

The cost or the 19-billion Expo Pilipino remained unsettled, the commission auditing buildings by allegations of corruption associated during the Estrada administration.

Former President Joseph Estrada ordered the park closed in 1999 and life-long mind to turn it into an economic enterprise.

Lacking said the opening has been exactly clear. LE Rosalyn Bahan, Inquirer Central Luzon

Judges slam House cut of courts' budget

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—Regional trial court judges here on Thursday assailed the budget cut proposed by the House of Representatives which, if approved, would slash more than P4 billion from the fund allocation for the judiciary.

Judge Fernando Flor, president of the Philippine Judges Association (PJA) in the province, said the slash in funds for trial courts from the proposed P1,227 billion national budget for 2008 was "unconscionable."

Flor, also director of the PJA in Northern Luzon, said the P11 billion budget proposed by court officials to the House has been reduced to about P8 billion.

He expressed disgust that the judiciary was left with less than 1 percent of the national budget.

"Our budget has been slashed for an apparent reason. The (final fault) is leading us to unconscionably absurdity." The said.

He said the days-long heads given to the judiciary have been leaving judges and court personnel to collect money from various sources, customarily local government sources, for basic court needs. Marivic Gonzales, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Alston 'one-sided,' says Army general

By Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A TOP AR- an official in Eastern Visayas described as "one-sided" the report of the United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings in the country.

Maj. Gen. Armando Tadeo, commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division based in Catbalogan City in Samar, said the report of Philip Alston was unfair to the Philippine Army.

"He never met any official of the (Philippine) Army in the province," said Guzmman.

"His report was very partial against us and has no basis at all," said Guzmman.

Guzmman said he was informed that Alston had wanted to visit a mass grave in Inopacan, Leyte but it didn't take place.

"For some reason, he never went to the area," said Guzmman.

The military had discovered the alleged mass grave last year in Sitio Sapang Dalin, Inopacan, containing 47 skeletal remains of alleged victims of a communist purge.

NEWSBRIEFS

Reward for bombers up to P100,000

KIDAPAWAN CITY—A P100,000 reward is out for any information leading to the arrest of other suspects in the Oct. 31 mall bombing that left one person dead and six others wounded.

Mayor Rodolfo Dominguez Jr. ordered the release of the money to anyone who can provide pertinent information that could lead to the arrests of the companions of Ramzia Majadder Indok and Alex Sarmiento Ingan.

Edwin B. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

Hero cop killed by robbers

CEBU CITY—A police officer, due to retire in January, was killed by two suspected robbers inside a public utility jeep here Tuesday night.

Supt. Alvin Dongpara, city police director, said SPO4 Rafael Bayde, radio operator of the city police office, died of gunshot wounds in the back that exited his chest.

Dongpara said Bayde was on his way to the downtown area at about 8 p.m. when he noticed two men with handguns tucked in their waists.

While he was trying to disarm one suspect, the other suspect pulled a gun and shot Bayde in the back.

Edwin B. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

Davao top doc dies

DAVAO CITY—Dr. Ignacio Gonzales, chief of hospitals of the Davao Medical Center here, died of cardiac arrest on Nov. 27.

He was 59.

Gonzales graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Medicine. He became a resident of the Philippine General Hospital before advancing to Davao and joined the Davao Medical Center in 1969. He became chief of hospitals from 1982 until his death.

He is survived by his wife Edith and children, Althea Joyce, Shelly Grace, Ian Gerald and Samantha.

His body lies at the DMC Wellness Center 2nd Floor. Interment is scheduled on Dec. 4 at the Davao Memorial Park.

Jonathan Bonifacio, Inquirer Mindanao

3 drown in Cagayan River

PAMPLONA, Cagayan—Three farmers drowned on Nov. 27 when their boat capsized in the Cagayan River, police said.

Police said Pacifico Ramos, Leon Pilotes and Johnny Bautista, all of San Pablo, Isabela, were searching for their carabaos that were carried away by the river current when their boat was turned.

Fidencio Calalay, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Archivists' workshop in Baguio

THE SOCIETY of Filipino Archivists will hold a seminar-workshop on Tagalog-ing Philippine Historical Records and Archives in Baguio City on Dec. 10-12 at the Hotel Supreme Convention Plaza.

The workshop aims to help participants understand the basic principles of archiving, know the tools in handling historical collections and make records scientific and responsive to history.

They will also learn to use the tools in organizing records and archives and gain awareness of role in preserving them.

For more details, contact Emma M. Rey—fax: 0917-5582-; mobile: 0919-; e-mail: ; Ma. Teresa E. Bautista—fax: 0920-756-; e-mail: ; Sarah T. Bautista—fax: 0919-; e-mail: .

Flooded Pampanga school draws attention

By Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

MAGALTEL, PAMPANGA—Flooded for most times of the year, the San Isidro Elementary School here became the butt of jokes of two Cabinet secretaries on Thursday.

In his speech, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. called it a "school of fishes."

"Pinilapot" was the line used by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, who also took his turn to speak on the podium.

Sagging bridge

To reach the school, Ebdane and Lopez crossed a makeshift bridge that, while sturdy enough for the rampaging waters from a river nearby, sagged.

They were walked through an alley where they stood the giants. This was so because the residents' version of Ebdane and Lopez were those that were lower in height but more known than the road's height.

At the school compound that looked even inch like a swamp, the secretaries went on muddying and wooden slabs to reach the new school building and three classrooms that they inaugurated that day.

It was one of two buildings spared from the floodwaters that reached knee-deep.

Two other buildings were swamped with stagnant waters. The single floor was among the few places that were dry that day.

Classrooms in four buildings among the 83,000 classrooms all over the country that need repair or total reconstruction, Lopez told the Inquirer.

At least P45 billion was needed to improve them, he added, citing World Bank's estimates.

In the 2008 budget, the government allowed P6 billion to build new classrooms, he said.

"The Department of Education promises 400,000 classrooms in public schools in the country.

Mr. President's emphasis is 2991 and other (modifiers) created by noise at the mouth of the Islands Bay but room, and the floods in the coastal areas of Bulacan, Macabebe and Masilia, and Pampanga Bay, Anna York Bondoc.

"In the rehabilitation that followed, our schools were the last to be repaired or improved," she said.

DPWH savings

The project "Retrofit of facilities were for relocation and sensitization facilities," conceptualized by Basil Isidro, former Mr. President Transport's Office chief in the Department of Public Works and Highways, and former Pampanga Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc in 2001, got off only in January 2007.

From out of its savings, the DPWH managed to scrape P40.6 million to build 10 school buildings in the three towns.

Like the one in San Isidro, each building has a total floor area of 189 square metres and is divided into three classrooms. Each building has a toilet and bathing cubicles and water supply.

Tina Santos, a teacher here for 33 years, has been pushing for flood-free schools.

Perfect attendance

"The floods here last throughout the year but we do not miss a class. We teach even when the water is up to our hips," Santos, 56, said.

She said parents were there children to school. She more than 600 students have sat on their desks during class hours, she said.

"We use water shoes sometimes when they go to school," she added.

A colleague, Gil Lacap, recalled Bondoc's role in the project.

"The water is low today," he said.

Flood-water can get as high as two meters, especially when dams on the eastern side release excess water.

Another colleague, Rosalia Vitug, said the fact that her students are using the same classrooms where she studied, referring to a building built after World War II.

Isabelita Asuncion said she used the same classrooms when she taught as an intern.

SPORTS

LEO HALIGUE plays a pivotal role anew for the rampaging Red Bull squad.

More Sports, including SEA Games, on A23-A26

Magnolia rips Purefoods; Red Bull wins

By Jun Mariano

ANTIPOLO CITY—THE LAW OF AVERAGES finally caught up with the Purefoods TJ Giants.

Magnolia's remarkable outside shooting brought the league-leading Giants down to their knees as the Beverage Masters pulled off an easy 108-86 win last night in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup.

Expecting a down-the-wire contest, the full house crowd at the Ynares Center here was instead treated to a blowout that started when the Beverage Masters broke into a shooting frenzy right in the first half.

Danny Seigle was simply unstoppable at the perimeter while Chris Calaguio, Olsen Racela and Lordy Tugade unloaded successive three-pointers that lifted the Beverage Masters to a 52-36 spread and set the tone for the rout.

Jason Castro, Villanueva and Simon Santiago did their share in the paint for the Beverage Masters, who sent the Giants to only their second defeat after nine outings.

"We've struggled in the first round," said Magnolia coach Siot Tanquingcen after the Beverage Masters avenged a Purefoods defeat in the first round and picked up a solid win to stay on top.

"If we want to get somewhere, we must make the players realize that they have to be consistent in the second round," said Tanquingcen, whose Beverage Masters led by as many as 40 points in the fourth period.

Racela, who still sustained his foot strain behind Cyrus Baguio and Leo Najorda, Mustang, Ad21, 108-93, to improve their second-round card to 7-3.

Baguio dashed his way to a game-high 27 points as early the Bulls-to-their fourth consecutive victory.

"Everybody's making a contribution by playing their respective roles. Someone steps up every game and it's their veteran players Mick (Pennisi), Jayjay (Alejandro) and Cyrus," added Gaston.

Najorda was the surprise package for the Bulls, drilling in 12 of his 16 points in the third quarter as the Bulls held off an Express squad that came to life in the second half.

The scores:

First game

PUREFOODS (108)—Baguio 27, Ingram 16, Yeng Guiao 14, Dylan 8, Cruz 7, Ildefonso 6, Pascual 6, Andaya 5, Reyes 5, Yeng Guiao 5, Mendoza 4, Ebarle 2.

ARWA (86)—Ilustre 18, Ao 16, Ga-Ganzon 15, Custodio 11, Chi 11, Cuevas 9, Alfaro 6, Cabahug 5, Cruz 3, Bahadi 3, Ong 0.

Quarters: 30-23, 51-45, 81-67, 108-86.

Second game

MAGNOLIA (108)—Seigle 22, Ango 19, J. Villanueva 16, Castro 14, Ilustre 13, Ilustre 10, Tolentino 7, Tugade 6, Ilustre 5, Ilustre 4, Cabahug 2, J. Villanueva 0.

PUREFOODS (86)—Castro 19, Yap 17, Salvador 8, Tolentino 8, Ilustre 8, Pingris 7, Ilustre 5, Ilustre 4, Cabahug 3, Tenorio 2, Ilustre 1, Cabahug 0.

Quarters: 28-13, 48-33, 67-56, 108-86.

Comets, Road Kings dispute quarterfinal bonus today

THE LAST QUARTERFINAL BONUS WILL be up for grabs when Mail and More and Toyota Balintawak clash today in 9 Go Ka-rerome Energy Drink Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

The Comets and the Road Kings square off for the twice-to-beat incentive at 3 p.m.

Nearly out of contention for the honors, the Comets gained another chance by winning their last good second game, while the Road Kings surprisingly dropped their own assignment.

"It's not about excellence, it's having the right kind of thinking," said Comets coach Allan Gregorio. "I don't want to make it hard on my players. They know what's in store for them."

It is a virtual best-of-three series between the two squads since they will meet again in the quarterfinal round beginning Dec. 18.

Third-ranked San Mig Coffee, the first to claim the quarterfinal privileges, will tangle against No. 6 Phoera in the other pairing.

Quarterfinal winners will go up against unbeaten Hapee and Hafbour Greats, which dominated the first two rounds in clinch outright semifinal berths.

"We're no longer talking about out of house, ultimate fellows after a good defense," said Gregorio after his Comets topped the Medics, 75-73, last Thursday to d'oppa a playoff.

Despite bemoaning the missed opportunity to nail the bonus, coach Ariel Vanguardia expects his Road Kings to recover from the 71-51 "nightmare win" over the Generals to dominate their Rainbow.

The Comets and the Road Kings, who wound up with similar 5-5 records, also split their two previous encounters.

Guards Henry Arellano and Rhel Bautista as the Comets repulsed the Road Kings, 83-74, in the eliminations.

But the Road Kings evened up matters with Ito Sta. Maria, 29 Cuan and Yek Rodriguez leading them to a 78-66 triumph in the good round.

Meanwhile, the league will take a break starting tomorrow until Dec. 17 to give way to the PBL stars suiting up for the Harbour Philippine Team in the South-east Asian Games.

—Jaymilen M. Pajo

Delarmente matches 72, stays 9 off lead

GEM RAY CABRERA—JEROME DELARMENTE MATCHED PAR 72 IN THE SECOND ROUND and remained in contention for a top 20 finish in the inaugural Johnnie Walker Cambodian Open Friday. Delarmente, who shot a 70 in the first round, was at 2-under par 142, nine strokes behind joint leaders Adam Groom of Australia (68-68) and Gregory Sallus of the US (66-67). Mary Pocay and Gerald Rosales made it to the weekend play after making the halfway cut of 150. Rosales carded with a 71 while Pocay also had a 72. Tony Lascuña teamed out with scores of 74-73.

—Asian Tour Wires

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2007 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Aplus METRO

Silent night in Metro Manila

By Tarra Quismundo

FOR FIVE HOURS YESTERDAY, Metro Manila was silent as a ghost town.

Gone was the chatter of pajeros as coffee shops in booming Makati City "retired" for the night. Gone, the sound of tipsy singing as recognized by the blare of 10-peso-song videoke machines was stunned.

In a metropolis that is awake 24/7, nightlife firebrand seems day as only shuttles experienced curfew hours for the first time in 35 years.

The imposition of curfew hours was an aftermath of a six-hour standoff at the Manila Peninsula, one of the country's most expensive hotels, between renegade soldiers and police and military troops.

Never has the start of a long weekend—yesterday being a holiday—been so eerily quiet and empty.

"Nobody has complained so far. If only people could always be this obedient," said DOT chief Ace Durano, standing a check-point at C-5 Road at Market! Market! at 2:45 a.m.

Metro Manila observed a curfew after then president Ferdinand Marcos placed the entire nation under martial law in September 1972.

It was tough for a metropolis where the late hall shone in movie houses ended past midnight and coffee is served until before dawn.

But with the exception of a few who were briefly detained for missing the announcement of curfew hours, it seemed the population chose to follow the rules.

Searchlights along the streets of Ermita and Malate in Manila were on throughout the night, but technically were not in parts it was possibly the first time the usually boisterous zone was so. Remember Circle was empty.

The bus was having coffee at Café Adriatico were all policemen.

The bus and restaurant strip in the prime "pinanick" spot looked forlorn. Stores filled with all forms dinners were empty. Even expert shoeliers were nowhere to be seen.

Burning Boulevard glowed with its colorful lights, but there was no one around enjoying a stroll by Manila Bay. Bars and restaurants were had shut down for the night.

Though a few establishments were open, there were no patrons, just security guards.

REPORT, A24

DOMFACIO DAY AT HERO'S BIRTHPLACE

Members of government and National Historical Institute officers, along with Krishna Mall, pay respects at the 149th birth anniversary of revolutionary hero Andres Bonifacio, also known as the founder of the Katipunan. Bonifacio (Bonifacio) and Procession Jose Ledesma Concepcion Marcelo Una Lino, Ding Ramirez (VP Sales and Marketing, Tondo Mall, Joseph Lino Pelaez) Tondo Association Officer, General Rodolfo Diaz Gonzales Secretary Office of the Mayor Joja Dy, PCA President Jaime Chino Pilo Officer and Roman Bishop of the National Historical Institute. (Jonathan Lopez)

Curfew catches people by surprise

Confusion leads to arrest of call center workers; others unaware of imposition

By Abigail L. Ho, Leila B. Salaverria, Norman Bordadora, Jeannette I. Andrade, Tuesday Dinglo and Alcuin Papa

SOME WORKERS IN THE CALL CENTER INDUSTRY were detained because of confusion arising from the imposition of the 12-5 a.m. curfew yesterday.

A team from one of the larger call centers in the country said some of their agents were caught on the streets during curfew time.

The agents were apprehended even though they presented identification cards and explained they were on their way home or to work.

"Management advised us about the curfew, but we were advised that all we had to do was present our IDs. However, some agents were still detained (including) one of our supervisors," the source, who declined to be identified, said.

Mobilization, through the Department of Interior and Local Government, announced the curfew Thursday night, following a standoff in Makati City between a group headed by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and police and military units.

In its guidelines, the Philippine National Police said the curfew covered Metro Manila, Region 3 and Region 4-A, with some exceptions.

Highchair workers like call center employees were among those exempted, provided they had proper IDs.

TeleTech, which has about 13,000 employees, advised workers to come in work early, particularly those whose shifts fell during curfew hours.

TeleTech's vice president and general manager for Asia Manila Pundit said that despite the curfew it was "business as usual." The company has facilities in Ortigas City, Mandaluyong City, Makati City and Bacolod.

Meanwhile, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the curfew was not essential last week.

He said there was a very big difference between curfew now and during martial law, in which time, Gonzalez said there were also travel and transport orders.

Civil rights were curtailed and the writ of habeas corpus suspended during martial law.

Gonzalez said there would not be possible under the present Constitution even if martial law was declared.

He said the curfew was imposed only to curb follow-up operations against those behind the Manila Peninsula siege Trillanes, who led the siege, is facing coup d'etat charges for the July 2003 mutiny of junior military officers.

PNP Chief Director General Avelino Razon, however, said there was no reason to suspend the curfew. "We're back to normal," he added. Interior Undersecretary Rhinio Gaspar also said there was no need for the curfew since police had overcome the unrest of the suspects in the uprising.

Similar pronouncements coming

CURFEW, A10

MALUNGGAY IN THE CITY

Urban farmers can grow wonder tree

By Amy R. Remo

FIGHTING HUNGER, POVERTY and malnutrition could start with something as simple as growing a tree.

The Department of Agriculture yesterday led in the launching of "Malunggay in the City," an urban farming program designed to empower poor communities in Metro Manila.

A joint project of the DA, Bicol Integrated Tungo in Isang Bayan and the Asian Center for Grassroots Communication and Advocacy, the program aims to promote the backyard planting of malunggay or moringa tree oil tree) in the city.

The DA has already identified 14 barangays in five cities and one municipality in Metro Manila as pilot areas for the project.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said this program will also be launched soon in urban poor communities of Metro Cebu, Metro Davao, Metro Naga and other metropolitan areas in the country, including Zamboanga del Norte.

Through the program, these communities will receive malunggay seedlings from the DA which they can plant in their backyards or any available land plot in their barangays.

The program can help towns achieve a better quality of life and better health because of the crop's outstanding nutritional and medicinal value, the DA said, adding that it can likewise help create greener urban communities.

The planting of malunggay will initially be carried out in 52 Metro areas including Barangays Commonwealth, Payatas and Pinyahan in Quezon City; Bagong Silang, Camarin, Tala, Bahay Area and Malaria in Caloocan City; Addition Hills in Mandaluyong City; San Antonio in Makati City; Ibayo Silangin and Parang in Marikina City and Sta. Ana in the municipality of Pateros.

Malunggay leaves are nutritionally rich in vitamins C and A, calcium, protein, iron and potassium and are also used for medicinal purposes.

DEPARTMENT of Agriculture Bureau of Plant Industry Director Joel Madlon (right) and Ernesto Olivarez, an urban poor group leader, plant a malunggay seedling at the launching yesterday of a program promoting backyard farming.

Here we go again

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

I HATE TO SAY THIS TO THE 11 million voters who handed senator Bong Revilla IV in the Senate, I told you so!

You didn't think twice before seeing the guy's name to paper ballots.

You voted for a man who has delusions of grandeur, thinking that only he can save the country from President Gloria.

You installed a spoiled brat in the Senate and the whole country is suffering the consequences of your decision.

* * *

Of course, the votes for Revilleses in the last elections were votes against abusive and corrupt governance, but it was a case of jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

I'm sorry, folks, for bringing up your mistakes, but it hurts.

I know how it feels to be told of one's mistake resting for the wrong guy.

I'm reminded of a mistake I made taking up the cudgels for a person whose power and influence eventually got to his head.

This person is not even a government official.

* * *

Senator Revilleses was treated like a common criminal by his police capors in he was being led out of the Peninsula Hotel, but many didn't mind.

He deserved that kind of treatment for destroying a beautiful hood, stealing the wife out of his conquests, and building the country and economy hostage.

* * *

I've been writing about Revilleses' abusive and hypocritical ways after a couple who alleged that he grabbed their property in Quezon City before the Ogbonwol Martial law on July 27, 2003 came to me.

If what they say it was, the senator is out the underdog and defender of the people that he projects himself to be.

If he were a defender of the people he wouldn't have taken over a property belonging to a couple who worked hard overseas to buy it.

The couple alleged that when he took over the property, he had armed goons, presumably soldiers, in tow.

Revilleses reportedly intimidated himself not to a military officer but as a businessman during that occasion.

When he ran for the Senate, Revilleses indicated that he lived in Caloocan City.

But it has been alleged that he resides in a millionaires' village in Antipolo City.

In defending himself that Revilleses and his evidenced buddies were used in having his way.

He and his friends reportedly held parties with their families inside the jail at the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (Isaf) in Camp Aguinaldo.

Revilleses was reported to have once challenged to a fight a captain who was in charge of the guards at the Marines brig (Jail) in Fort Bonifacio, who just followed orders that civil not allow him to receive visits from outsiders.

* * *

The shabby handling by police of media people who covered the Peninsula Hotel siege was a first in the history of Philippine journalism.

Television reporters who covered hostage-taking and plane hijacking incidents even in the unlicensed martial law years were left alone to do their job by the police and military.

Even the much-feared Col. Rolando Abadilla of the defunct Metropolitan Command (Metrocom) didn't arrest journalists who got in the way of a hostage-taking incident at a bank in Cubao, Quezon City.

The police and the media, controlled as they were by the Marcos government as the time, had a healthy respect for each other.

Here comes that in democratic times like now the police have become condescensive to their ways.

METRO BRIEFS

Bird watchers race, exhibit

THE RECREATIONAL Outdoor Exchange (ROX) and the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP) have organized an event called "The ROX Bird Race Challenge" which starts at 3 p.m. today and ends tomorrow at 3 p.m. Ten teams of bird watchers will scour Metro Manila's remaining green spaces, wetlands, grasslands and parks to spot and record as many bird species as possible within a 24-hour period. Bird species recorded in Metro Manila number more than 100 at this time of year, when migratory from mainland Asia and Japan stay for the duration of winter. "The teams will be composed of experienced bird watchers, so rare towns and first-time adventure racers," says WBCP president and race coordinator Michael Lu. "We expect an exciting race and a good number of bird species based on our initial surveys and bird counts." The WBCP bird watching competition and conservation Array (pictured). There will also be a series of activities on Sunday, 2 p.m. at Bonifacio High Street, The Fort in Taguig City. There will be environmental exhibits, lectures, face painting for children and a wildlife conservation show featuring animals from the BUAN Wildlife Rescue Center. For more information, visit ROX at Building 1, Bonifacio High Street, Or call 856-4508, 856-3038 or e-mail Michael Lu at michael@ihrest.ph.

Flower arrangement workshop reset

THE FLOWER arrangement workshop to be conducted by Ambassador Sanjoun S. Matilla originally scheduled for Dec. 5-6 has been reset to Dec. 13-16. It will be held from 1 to 5 p.m. at Matilla Plant Arts, Ang Louis Garden Center, Matilla Seedling Bank corner Edsa and Quezon Avenue, Quezon City. The workshop includes lectures and demonstrations on Ikebana, garland making, floral arrangements for special occasions like weddings or Christmas, tips on sourcing of materials and lengthening the vase life of plants and flowers. Only 20 participants will be accepted. Ikebana vases, floral foam, flower shears, flowers and foliage are included in the workshop fee, along with snacks, hand rolls and certificates. For more details, contact tel. nos. 000-6000-430-0476 or call no. 3017-8021/22. You may also e-mail matillaplantarts@yahoo.com.ph.

Quezon City hall to set up OFW desk

By Jeannette I. Andrade

QUEZON CITY MAYOR FELICIANO BELMONTE Jr. has ordered the establishment of a unit to assist overseas workers in properly managing their remittances.

Belmonte directed the city's industrial relations office-public employment services office (IRO-PESO), the social services development department (SSDD), the Silop Bulong and the cooperatives center in San Roque for the setting up of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) desk in city hall.

In letters the measure, the IRO-PESO and the SSSD have been tapped to determine the actual number of OFWs residing in the city for programs that would help them spend hard-earned money wisely.

Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista said it was imperative for the city government to protect the families of OFWs from needless spending and to advise them on wise investments instead, claiming that the majority do not know how to invest their money.

Bautista also spearheaded a money campaign for overseas worker Marilou Baranio, a domestic worker in Kuwait who was sentenced to die by hanging for killing her employer. Baranio was a resident of Area 1, Bagumbayan Norte in Barangay Holy Spirit.

Bautista's initiative was supported by the 24-member city council.

The council will submit to the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Philippine Embassy its position asking that Baranio be spared from ending up like Flor Contemplacion, a domestic helper who was executed in Singapore more than a decade ago.

Baby needs financial help

LEMUEL RODRIGUEZ was born more than a year ago with a mass of fluid protruding between his eyes.

His attending physician at the Philippine Children's Medical Center in Quezon Avenue in Quezon City, told the baby's mother that her child has meningocele.

"It gets bigger and bigger by the day and I pity my youngest child," said Lemuel's mother Geremia, of Barangay San Pascual, Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija, in her letter to the Inquirer.

She said her husband has no regular job to be able to meet the expenses for the operation. "I'm looking for people who would be kind enough to help us," she said.

Lemuel is scheduled for an operation today at PCMC. Those can call Geremia at 434-2421 or can her cell number 0923-4941122. Financial aid can be deposited at her LandBank account number 3306.0129. 10. Santiago E. Alconera

MARCELO

Curfew catches people

. . . From page A-1

the Peninsula incident who were brought to a police camp would only be liable if they were found to have been involved in the incident, the justice secretary added.

Meanwhile, the chair of the House committee on human rights said yesterday the curfew was both unconstitutional and unnecessary.

Quezon Rep. Lorenzo Tañada III, a lawyer and chair of the House human rights panel, said the imposition of curfew hours was a violation of human rights. He said the installation of checkpoints on the streets of Metro Manila and nearby areas would have sufficed.

Pasalanan Rep. Rufo Colmo, deputy majority leader in the House, concurred, saying it impeded the movements of more than 13 million Filipinos in Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog.

Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño agreed the curfew was unconstitutional "because there is no clear and present danger or imminence of a person's right is cured."

Administration congressmen, however, defended the curfew. Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, chair of the House committee on appropriations, said it "was for the protection of the state." Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles said it was meant to prevent further disorder.

In Quezon City the police arrested 147 people for alleged violation of the curfew. Most of those arrested, 15 of whom had illegal weapons, firearms and ammunition, claimed they were unaware of the curfew.

QC Police District Director Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatchalian said of the 147 persons charged, 12 were charged for possession of illegal weapons. Those with carrying guns were released after showing permits to carry firearms outside their homes.

At least 602 people, mostly men, were held in Central Luzon Friday for curfew violation. The police arrested 236 violators in Tarlac, 124 in Bulacan, 68 in Nueva Ecija, 127 in Pampanga, 33 in Subic and five in Zambales.

Silent night in Metro Manila

From page A-1

Twenty-four hour convenience stores remained open, but there were no customers. A few 24-hour fastfood chains had no choice but to close their doors.

Upscale nightspots at The Fort in Taguig City were also closed. There was not a single car in sight.

At the densely populated port area in Manila, only workers and busy Binondo along Escolta were closed for the night. Pedestrians lined up near intersections, their 10-feet guns, no doubt waiting for daylight.

The major thoroughfares Edsa, C-5 road and Taft were clear of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Only media vehicles, taxi cabs, trucks and a few private vehicles were out on the road.

Some cabbies wanted God-fidelity searching for passengers. Others decided to just wait until the curfew was lifted, parking along empty streets, easements and gasoline stations.

Many parked their cabs along 700 Roxas Avenue near Rizal Park that the place looked like a taxi depot.

There were a few signs of activity. An ambulance was seen in Roxas Boulevard, and 10 Rizal Security Guard were also "building on Ayala Ave., and policemen and soldiers guarding Manila Peninsula.

At checkpoints, policemen checked identification cards, most of which belonged to rail service employees. People catching early flights or going to the provinces were also checked.

SEX FOR CHARITY
Maria Carolina, a Chilean prostitute, has auctioned 27 hours of sex to raise money for the country's largest charity during an annual fund-raising campaign. She became an overnight celebrity in the conservative Roman Catholic country, making news headlines and appearing on talk shows since she made her unusual donation to the televised charity event, which ran for 27 hours. AFP/GETTY

Teen accused of cracking 1.3M computers, skimming millions

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND—POLICE QUESTIONED the suspected mastermind behind one of the largest computer hacking rings ever uncovered as authorities said the network of infiltrating 1.3 million computers and skimming millions of dollars from victims' bank accounts, officials said Friday.

Working with the FBI and police in the Netherlands, New Zealand police raided the home of the 18-year-old in the south Island city of Hamilton and took him into custody along with several computers, said Martin Kilkolan, head of the police electronic crime center. He was later released without charge after being questioned, though police said he was still part of their investigation.

The unit is part of an international crackdown on hackers who allegedly amassed control of thousands of computers and mined them into centrally controlled armies known as bot nets. The hackers used the power of the computers to maximize credit card information, manipulate stock trades and even crash industry computers, authorities say.

Eight people have been indicted, pleaded guilty or have been convicted since the investigation began in late 2005. The convictions carried sentences of more than five years in the U.S. and overseas in the investigation.

The FBI estimates that more than one million computers have been infected and puts the combined economic losses at more than $US100 million.

The New Zealander, known by his cyber identification as "Kidd," was "head of an international spyder ring that has infected computers around the world with Bots controlling software," Kilnalyer said. Scotland Radio.

Kilnalyer said The Associated Press the teenagers whom name was not released because he was under 18 when the alleged offenses began, was cooperating with investigators in telling them how the entire system works.

"We have seized a number of computers and are talking with him," he said. "We are going by evidence and the case will develop from there. We're still in the early stages of the investigation."

Detective Inspector Peter Devoy, the senior investigator in the case, said the youth was later released after questioning and had not been charged.

Further investigation of the world's seized computers could lead to more national arrests, he said, "and I anticipate we will be talking to MANY more," Devoy said.

Kilnalyer said possible charges against the teen could involve having unauthorized access to computers and possessing software designed for the purpose that carry a maximum sentence of 10 years on prison.

Spyder and botnet are jargon for talkbrowsing a group of computers and infecting them with malicious software that allows users to infect and control them remotely. Bot could not be reached for comment.

Kilnalyer said the New Zealander had written software that evaded normal computer spyware systems. They said his skills to hackers.

"He is very bright and very skilled in what he's doing," Kilnalyer said. "He knew his systems and its effects."

AP

Teenage cyber criminals who've made headlines

SERIOUS AND OTHER

teenage hackers who have made headlines since the past, while not as in global cyber crime.

• Raphael Gray: The unemployed Welsh 19-year-old famously hacked Microsoft founder Bill Gates' credit card details and sent him a shipment of male anthropomorphic drug! He got in an online spree that ended with an FBI swoop on the teenagers' home of Ogmore, in Glamorgan, south Wales, in 2001. Sentenced to three years' community rehabilitation for stealing credit card information from thousands of people, Gray was later employed by a computer software company.

• Kevin Mitnick: "Computer hacker" Mitnick, one of the world's most famous computer hackers, reportedly started out hacking phone systems in his teens. Before moving on to computers, he became a conscientiser after the FBI launched a three-year manhunt to stop him from breaking into networks and stealing software at companies including Sun Microsystems and Motorola. After serving an almost five-year stint in US jail in the 1990s, and stopping on night rose him from staffing the web. Mitnick now travels the world advising companies on how to protect themselves from cyber crime.

• The 'Pentagon hackers': In 1998 two California teenagers who invented one of the most notorious hack attacks ever on US military computers were released from penitentiary or using a computer modem, to set up as computer consultants, or having only contact with computers out of sight of "cultured teaches, a librarian, an employer." Known as the "Singapore hackers," the then 16- and 17-year-olds who were by the code-names "Makwood" and "Foobles," were given three years probation for assaults on sensitive military and institutional computers.

• Joseph McElroy: In 2006, the Swansea-based British 18-year-old was only escaped jail after sparking a nuclear panic by flashing into a top secret US research centre. Hoping to use Internal National Accelerator Laboratory on Illinois's advanced research to download and store "thousand music from the Internet, the then 18-year-old boy gained a slow-down of the system that caused technicians to panic. "The panic button," detectives at Scotland Yard traced the student to his flat London home and he received a 200-hour community punishment order.

Reuters

Musharraf says he'll lift emergency rule Dec.16

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—Hours after being sworn in to a second term, President Pervez Musharraf announced on Thursday he would lift his state of emergency on Dec. 16, leaving hostile there weeks he elections campaigning and setting the stage for further confrontation with his opposition.

Musharraf's promise to lift the emergency came after he ended eight years of military rule on Wednesday and was another step toward meeting some of the many demands both at home and abroad to return the country to democracy.

"I fully intend to lift the emergency on Dec. 16, to end the Provisional Constitutional Order and to hold fair and free elections according to the constitution," he said in an address to the nation on state television and radio on Thursday evening.

"The abolition or re-handle will be allowed in this election process," he added. "Elections, God willing, will be held on Jan. 8 according to the constitution and no one should create any hurdles."

He even believe his announcement, an embodies resurgence of opposition parties. But Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, told they supported a boycott of the elections. AFP

Turkish airliner crashes; all 56 on board killed

ANKARA—A TURKISH MILITARY CRASHED near the town of Isparta in central Turkey on Friday, killing all 56 people on board, officials said.

"Rescue teams have reached the wreckage. There are no survivors," Atlantic airlines chief executive, Tuncay Doğulan, told a televised news conference. Fifty-six said all on board appeared to have been Turkish.

The Airbus A320 A3 plane, manufactured by McDonnell Douglas, crashed in the mountainous Sultan Dağları area of the Isparta province of central Turkey. It had been flying from Istanbul with 139 passengers and seven crew.

It was not immediately clear what had caused the crash, which occurred 12 km from Isparta's Süleyman Demirel airport.

Dogan said weather conditions were not abnormal at the time of the crash and that he knew of no technical deficiencies aboard the aircraft. The aircraft's black box should explain what happened, he said.

Turkey is now in the grip of winter with snow and fog common at higher ground near mountains of the country.

"No matter what measures you take, plane accidents happen and we see that 60 to 80 percent are due to human mistakes," said Transport Minister Binali Yildirim.

Rescue workers reached the mountain site crash site after military helicopters spotted the wreckage of the airliner.

Turkish media reported a huge explosion of the plane, with emergency calls open, to see on the side of a burned hill.

Aviation evidence arrived at Istanbul airport seeking news about the passengers.

The aircraft disappeared from radar screens shortly before it was due to land at Isparta, almost 150 km south of the Mediterranean resort of Antalya.

The state Anadolian news agency said aviation authorities had contact with the plane just after the pilot said he was preparing to land at Isparta.

Reuters

Shanghai tycoon draws 16 years for bribery

ZHOU ZHENGYI

SHANGHAI, CHINA—A Shanghai real estate tycoon, who was once one of China's richest men, was sentenced Friday to 16 years in prison following a trial for bribery, tax evasion and embezzlement, state media reported.

Zhou Zhengyi was arrested in October 2006 amid a probe of government misconduct that brought down the Shanghai Communist Party secretary and other top leaders. Zhou, 45, earlier earned a three-year prison term for fraud and stock manipulation.

The official Xinhua News Agency reported Zhou's 16-year sentence after a closed hearing Friday, citing economic crimes in Shanghai No. 2 Intermediate People's Court. It gave no further details.

The financial magazine Caijing said Zhou also was fined 3.35 million yuan ($450,000).

Zhou's wife was held a little over a month ago.

Calls to the Hangzhou No. 2 Intermediate Court were not answered. Zhou's lawyer, Ma Shaoling, had instructed off his mobile phone and could not immediately be reached for comment.

Earlier, Ma had refused to speculate on the likely outcome of the trial.

"What can we expect? Let's see what the court will say," Ma said in a phone interview.

It was unclear if Zhou would appeal. AP

Energy-hungry India seeks to be 'wind superpower'

NEW DELHI, INDIA (AFP) SIGHT by powered up a fast-growing, global-warming economy of one billion people but it is also one of the world's biggest wind power users, part of a bid to use renewable energy mostly untapped in the West.

Years of tax incentives have helped make India one of the fastest-growing markets for wind power, a major component of renewable energy that will be high on the agenda of the Dec. 3-14 climate change meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

The Bali conference comes as international pressure mounts on India to restrict its growth goes cleaner. The International Energy Agency (IEA) warned this month of the disastrous changes of "unlimited" energy demand growth in India.

"When it comes to renewable energy and wind power, India can look like West in the eye and it is one of the most pro-active, progressive policies," said Santosh Harish, a wind power specialist and associate director at IDFC-consultants.

Wind power in India is still a relatively newer compared with the US, Europe's overall energy needs that are dependent on coal and oil.

With its reliance on dirty fuels, India only becomes the world's No. 5 carbon emitter by 2015, the IEA says.

But renewable energy, of which the vast majority is wind power, accounts for more than seven percent of India's installed generation capacity—a rate that compares favorably with much of the rest of the world.

India is the world's fourth largest wind power market.

"Wind power is growing tremendously. If you want a wind plant, you'll have to book a year in advance," said Chandan Bhushan, associate director at the New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment.

"There's been years of progressive policies and recognition for a long time that India will be a big market for wind."

India, with its thousands of miles of coastline, is suited to wind power. Its wind power potential is estimated at 45,000 megawatts—about a third of total energy consumption.

There is also little of the concern in India seen in the West over wind turbines ruining scenic vistas—towers can be seen, for example, outside Jaisalmer's ancient fort in Rajasthan, one of India's most popular tourist cities.

The boom brings its perils, the kind of strenuous circle experts say is needed for renewable energy to really work.

Ari Vyas's MBB Delhi Ltd, one of India's largest wind-power firms, sales rose 80 percent in 2006 and the company forecasts growth of about 40 percent this year, company officials say.

India's rise to robust support is not a "wind superpower" is due to tax breaks in the 1990s and to Tata Tatri, chair of India's Energy, India's biggest wind-energy company.

Troubled by power shortages in the 1990s, he let the breaks boom in western India, he brought some wind turbines, and soon realized he could be a good business. BSE company quickly became the pioneer in the sector.

Wind power has also been helped by some steep setting targets that 20 percent of their power should come from renewable energy.

Reuters

Mrs. Blair: Many societies kick widows out of family homes

UNITED NATIONS—WOMEN IN some northern areas of Nepal and India are expected to shave their heads, sleep on the floor and bathe from new after their husbands die.

In many societies across Africa and Asia, these widows and their children are "kicked out of their family's home and forced to live in abject poverty," Cherie Blair, the wife of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, said Thursday.

Blair was in New York to promote the launch of a report from the Lourdes Trust, which educates the children of widows in India who are often disrespected because of cultural traditions.

The report estimates over 100 million widows and 400 million children are being failed by the global community.

The charity, of which Blair is president, is hoping to use the report to highlight the plight of widows and generate US support for the adoption of a resolution designating June 23 as International Widows Day.

"They are one of the groups across the world who are the most ignored, the most denied of their human rights," Blair said. "They suffer appalling discrimination and violence and isolation."

In a result of that widows and their children find themselves kicked out of their family home, forced to live in abject poverty, pushed to the margins of society," Blair said. "Therefore they are vulnerable to abuse violence and sexual exploitation."

There are currently 30 million widows struggling to bring up children in India, and 300 million worldwide because of suicide, AIDS/AIDS and other circumstances.

"In northern areas of Nepal and in India, they may still be expected to shave their heads, sleep on the floor, wear white, so that they can be distinguished easily and hide from sight for the rest of their lives," Blair said. "In Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, they can be prevented from joining the workforce so they can't support their families. And across Africa and Asia widows are denied or denied use of their husbands assets and property."

The Lourdes Trust, however, said the problem is largely invisible.

There is no mention of it in the UN Millennium Development Goals which were agreed by world leaders at a summit in September 2000 to help eradicate poverty, she said.

"What educate children of poor widows of India and support their widowed mothers to live a life of dignity," said Raj Lourdes, a cofounder of the Lourdes Trust.

The charity now in 40, 000 poor widows 13,000 children in India and 500 children who lost their fathers in both parents in the tsunami in Tamil Nadu. The charity was set up in honor of Lourdes's mother, who was widowed at the age of 37 and raised her seven children by herself.

AP

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence K. Casaso

Bin Laden urges EU to quit Afghanistan

DUBAI—AL-QAIDA LEADER OSAMA BIN LADEN URGED European countries to end their military cooperation with US forces in Afghanistan, in an audio tape aired by Al Jazeera television on Thursday.

He said Americans were now suffering and it would be wise for the European to quickly end their role in Afghanistan, where many European countries contribute to the 30,000-strong Nato and US-led coalition force fighting the Taliban rebels.

"With the grace of God ...the 'mujahedin' (Islamic fighters) are resisting and they would eventually return to their home across the Atlantic ... It is in your interest to force the hand of your politicians (away from) the 'White House'," said a speaker in the recording who sounded like Bin Laden.

He said the United States would soon leave the region, leaving Afghanistan's neighbors "to settle their scores."

In Washington, a US counterterrorism official said the voice on the audio tape appeared to be Bin Laden's. It was not immediately clear when the new message was recorded.

The United States led the invasion of Afghanistan to depose its Taliban rulers in late 2001, after they refused to hand over Bin Laden and other Al-Qaida leaders following the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

Bin Laden did not make any threat in the portions of the recording aired by Jazeera.

In the portions aired by Jazeera, Bin Laden said the Taliban had no knowledge of plans for the 2001 attacks.

"I was the one responsible... The Afghan people and government knew nothing whatsoever about these events," he said, adding that the United States had not provided any evidence of Taliban involvement to justify its invasion.

"Europe soon had behind it with no choice but to be a loyalty," Bin Laden said.

"I'm addressing you (European) and not your politicians ... (who) like to be in the shadow of the White House as many third world leaders," he said, naming current and former leaders of Britain, France, Spain and Italy, including French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Among European countries with troops in Afghanistan are Britain, Germany and France. The West says coalition forces are to help bring security to allow reconstruction after decades of conflict. —Reuters

STILL photograph of Bin Laden grabbed from Al Jazeera television footage.

INGRID Betancourt, French-Colombian politician kidnapped since February 2002, in one of a video released by the Colombian government in Bogota/Nov. 28.

Colombia has proof hostages may be alive

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA—COLOMBIA'S TOP peace negotiator announced early Friday morning the government had seized videotapes of rebel-held hostages, including three US defense contractors and former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt.

High Commissioner for Peace Luis Carlos Restrepo said the tapes were confiscated after the arrest Thursday evening of three suspected urban members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, better known as the FARC.

The tapes are the first images in years providing evidence the hostages may be alive.

The videotapes, which were played at a news conference at police headquarters, showed no extremely gaunt faces over, apparently chained, in front a jungle backdrop. In the silent images, Betancourt, who was kidnapped in 2002, has long been and stares intently at the ground.

The government said the tapes caused the three Americans' of Oct. 24, 2007. The tape of the Americans carried the date of Jan. 1, 2007, but a kidnapped Colombian soldier, who appeared on the same tape, said the recording was being made on Oct. 23.

The Americans, Thomas Howes, Keith Stansell and Marc Gonsalves, were abducted by the FARC after their plane went down in southern Colombia in 2003.

Restrepo said the five tapes showed images of 11 other Colombians, mainly members of the security forces.

The FARC are offering to release these and other hostages in exchange for the freeing of hundreds of rebels from Colombian and US prisons.

Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez had been involved in trying to mediate a deal between the government and the rebels until last week when President Alvaro Uribe ended his role, saying Chavez had disobeyed a direct order by contacting the head of Colombia's army.

During his time as mediator, Chavez had demanded from the FARC so-called "proof of life" of the hostages, evidence that they were indeed still alive.

Restrepo said the army also found various letters, including an undated letter from Howes to his wife, as well as a card dated Nov. 26, 2006. A letter from Gonsalves to the military commander of the FARC, known as "Mono Jojoy," dated Oct. 25, 2007, and a letter from Betancourt to her mother dated Oct. 24, 2007. —AP

WHAT'S INSIDE

Pacman-Marquez II set Mar. 15 /A24

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy B. Melendres Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

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Celtics unforgiving /A25

Trillanes caper in SEAG news

By Mucong B. Castillo

A DEJECTED Taz Padilla leaves the range with his malfunctioning gun

Padilla comes to grief as gun malfunctions

By Mucong B. Castillo

BANGKOK—THE POTENTIAL THAT Philippine gold medal in the 50th Southeast Asian Games here got struck in the hand of Nathaniel "Taz" Padilla's expensive gun Friday as the breaks continued to elude Filipino shooters after four days of the biennial meet.

Padilla's P220,000 Pardini .22 caliber pistol malfunctioned twice in the second qualifying stage of his per 25-meter rapid fire event, dooming the Philippines' chances of a breakthrough gold and reducing the muzzler shooter to tears (See story on A24).

"This hurts because I prepared so hard for this event," said Padilla, wiping off tears inside the locker room. "I had problems with this gun before leaving Our Thailand, but we already fixed it with the pasts coming directly from Italy."

The 32-year old, multi-titled shooter not only said blowing the chance to shoot down a medal but the opportunity to make the record books as well.

"I even had a chance to break the 588 Games record," added Padilla, who first won this event as a 21-year old in Jakarta 20 years ago. "The (potential) 30 points I lost already told the story."

Padilla settled for 586 points, 26 shy of the record 612.

That mark was eventually shattered by two Malaysians, Hafiz Adillin and Rudi Ismam Amir Hasan, who fired 572 and 571 points, respectively, to tie six others into the medal round later in the day.

The other Filipino in the event, Ruben Gonzales, was never really in it and finished with 518 points.

Thai Open Boxingpanyawut rallied to win the gold medal, shooting 594.8 points to nip Hasan (589.2), 700.8 to 700.2. Their total output came from the second stage of classification and 10 shots in the finals.

Adillin tallied 107 for the bronze at 759.

The 50m prone rifle team of Edcile Yenan, Edwin Fernandez and Rudy Padilla Jr. tallied sixth in a seven-team field, shooting 1,726 points in the only other event the Philippines was entered for the day.

Padilla's gun first jammed after just two shots of the second 6-second session. And

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Pacman-Marquez II set Mar. 15

PACQUIAO: Bigger prize money

By Salvee L. Lagumbay, Contributor

WHAT THEY FAILED TO RESOLVE IN THEIR FIRST SHOWdown, Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez will try to settle when they clash anew in a grudge rematch slated March 15 at the Mandalay Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

The megabout title fight between Marquez, the Mexican WBC super featherweight champion, and Pacquiao, the Filipino big supremo and No. 1 contender, was jointly announced Thursday by Golden Boy Promotions and Top Rank, in association with Romanera Boxing Productions and MP Promotions through GBP vice president Eric Gomez.

Mandalay Bay was also the venue of Marquez's loss to Chihuahua fighter Marco Antonio Barrera, whom he beat by unanimous decision.

The announcement for the Pacquiao-Marquez II, to be shown on HBO Pay-Per-View, ended months of speculation as to who will be Pacquiao's next opponent.

Among those mentioned were Mexicans David Diaz, the WBC lightweight champion; Venezuelan knockout artist and WBA super featherweight titlist Edwin Valero and even retired great and GBP boss Oscar De La Hoya.

In their initial encounter on May 8, 2004, Pacquiao and Marquez battled to a controversial draw and both fighters have expressed interest in putting a close to that encounter.

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Pacquiao was set to flyto the United States with promoter Bob Arum to hold the fight's first press conference on Dec. 20.

Arum is coming to the country to attend Pacquiao's 29th birthday on Dec. 17, according to Pacquiao's close associate Rod "Pinoy Ko" Salud.

MARQUEZ: Chance for revenge

Patafa's Go calls PSC exec names

By Marc Anthony Reyes

BANGKOK—A CONFRONTATION out of the sporting kind.

Controversial athletics chief Go Teng Kok on Friday challenged Philippine Sports Commissioner Richo Garcia to a fight "in the proper forum" when the pitch-bodybuilder-turned-coach-to-be broke down in tears.

Aside from calling Garcia a clot, he accused of demanding 30 percent commissions from PSC suppliers, some of them from China, from where Go said some "inferior equipment" were being delivered by the sports agency.

Garcia has long laughed off the allegations and has asked Go to produce evidence to support his charges.

"I am coming up with this statement so that he can see me and we can fight it out in the proper forum," Go said in an emotion-filled outburst that he is facing something.

Garcia had reacted in a report on Thursday which said Go was giving about the last amount of supplies, on the eighth period, for his athletes in the 15th Asian Track and Field Association.

"We gave them (Manila P12 million for the past already what more does he (Go) want," Garcia said. "We NSA (national sports association) Chairperson handing as much as they (athletes) do."

But Go, who said that he was back up his "Mr. Important" claim with a statement coming from his supplier which Garcia had thickened, vowed to cut talks amounting to P12 million if Garcia can prove that the PSC had turned over to the Manila that much cash.

"They haven't given us anything, not even a cent (in support)," Go said.

TOUGH THREAT ATHLETICS chief Go Teng Kok reports SEA Games long jump queen Meranaida Torres (in the photo) to remain her title in Thailand. The Philippine track and field contingent is going to match its silver-gold output in the Manila edition two years ago. The Filipino team bows perennial contenders for the GSAC track crown.

Padilla comes to grief as gun jams twice

From page A33

because international rules allow each shooter one additional shot stage. Padilla carried a re-shoot and promptly garnered down a perfect 50.

Then disaster struck again.

Padilla failed to get shots off in his last three targets in the final set of the 4-second series, grimacing and letting out a yell to vent out his frustration.

The basketball-loving businessman rescored shooting in the next 6 seconds and the closing one-4 second series to finish with a total of 147 points.

Padilla, who has not won a SEAG gold since the 1983 Games in Singapore, missed a shoot-off for the 25m/free pistol by a measly point Thursday that shut Alda's fate him since he saw it as a good warming for the rapid fire.

With the debacle, shooting will be hard-pressed to duplicate its 3-3-1 gold-silver-bronze haul that contributed to the Philippines' first-ever overall title, won in Manila two years ago.

Padilla will return to the Thailand Target and Clay Stamps here on Saturday to campaign in the 25m centre fire event...where he does not give himself a strong chance to win...before the skeet team gone for a repeat of their team and individual gold in the Manila SEAG on Dec. 2.

"This (rapid fire) is the event I really prepared for," he said. "We have a chance. Iran it is not as good as (the one we had in the event)."

Padilla will use a different gun for the centre fire, but his ammo are at least six years old, picked up from some marksmen back home because 22-cal. fire rounds are very different to find in Asia, according to team manager Bobbie Hermano.

Lady Stags zero in on first Shakey's V-League crown

By Rumina S. Aurora

SAN SEBASTIAN SPIKE: Lorraine Ann Lariga blocks a power smash by Suzanne Roces of UST in yesterday's Game 1 at The Arena.

SAN SEBASTIAN COLLEGE, hounded by veteran all-night, pulled off a hard-fought 25-16, 20-18, 17-26, 23-25, 15-13 win over University of Santo Tomas yesterday to force within a win of bagging its first championship in the 2007 Shakey's V-League women's volleyball second conference at The Arena in San Juan.

Lorraine Ann Lariga, named Finest Player of the Conference before the match, scored the Lady Stags' last three points to seal the win, hammered out before a near billboard crowd.

They got for the clincher at 4 p.m. tomorrow.

Lariga was also named a UST to be the game for the last time at 12-all with a cut violation while Venus Bristol tried to extend the series opener with a smash that missed the Tigresses within 13-14.

Ben Lariga, the 5-foot-7 reigning NCAA Most Valuable Player, finished the Tigresses by coming up with the game-ending point.

"It all boiled down to who had the higher desire to win," said San Sebastian coach Roger Gorayeb, whose team finished second to La Salle last year and to UST in the first conference. "It much was only do or made. I told my players to just score, they're on their own."

In the first game, Tigresses devoted Adamson University, 14-25, 25-21, 25-19, 25-19, in their separate series for third place.

Another win tomorrow would award the Lady Tigresses third place. The quickest system will be used to determine the third placer in case Adamson ties and San Sebastian ends the Stags' series.

The Lady Stags took the first two sets with Thai import Jarounsri Rasdee, Lariga and Rizabelle Devanadera scoring almost at will.

The second set went the same way as only Bristol and guest player Suzanne Roces played consistently the UST while the rest of the Tigresses got most of their points off the Lady Stags' errors.

The other special awardees were Bristol (1st Plus Player of the Conference), Adamson's Jane Sorsfica (Most Improved Player), Jose Rabadanis Mary Jane Rojas (Fourth Player of the Conference), UST's Angela Tabagoso (Sportsmanship award) and Arizona's Ma. Beatriz Soriano (most energy award).

The MVP and Mythical Six winners will be announced before the start of the final match tomorrow.

SPORTSWATCH

Execs chess 8th leg today

THE EIGHTH LEG OF THE NATIONAL Chess Federation (NCFP) Executive and Professionals Chess Challenge gets underway today at the Intramuros Golf Club, Maldino Street, Ortigas, Quezon City.

NCFP executive director Jaime Sammy Dalisay said executives from the provinces are competing in the tournament initiated by federation chair Prof. Makati Dimalanta and supported by Cebu sportsman Ronald Acuna. GM Eugene Torre, IM Rodel Zardoza and NCFP directors Ed Martin Bergado Jose Raul "Pinoy" Monteza, Sen. Ali Cortinas and Jane Tiong.

For inquiries, call SM Sports at 8502-8807/8911, Dr. Jaime Magno (02) 16-4132/0916 or Lorenzo (0917) 8962264.

P2-M Roligon derby unfolds

THE FIRST BATCH OF 70 PARTICIPANTS plunge into action as the "P2M Rhode Nimbin Long" 5-unit derby kicks off today at Roligon Mega Dockyard in Pasil Bay.

The 5-unit elimination round will also be held on Tuesday and Thursday next week, next Friday, Oct. 5 and the Super Mega group on Thursday, Oct. 11 with the 6-unit finals for the championship on Dec. 8.

The winners will get a guaranteed prize of P2 million. Entry fee is P1,000.

For inquiries, call 0917-8223-6 or 8353-3600.

UGBA 9-stag semis starts

THE SEMIFINAL ROUND OF THE UGBA Heritage Cup National 9-Stag Derby begins today at San Juan Coliseum with nine 180 matches sponsored by Sagupaan Commerce (SSS).

Forty-eight participants have scored a perfect three-zero mark, among them Francis Antonio with two aces, Francis Manuel, Rene Bong Antonio (SSS Condar Digo, Bobby Dominguez, Ricardi Rodriguez, Rep. Arthur Celeste, Nestor Fondevil, Lee Pangandian, Ortong Fortunio, Alex Tang, Jun Sevilla and Nilver Sy, according to United Gamecock Breeders Association president Rene Dizon.

Celtics unforgiving

Boston routs New York, 104-59

BOSTON—THE BOSTON CELTICS, LED BY 21 POINTS EACH FROM RAY ALLEN and Paul Pierce, teamed in a stunning 104-59 humiliation of the beleaguered New York Knicks on Thursday.

Only a three-point lesion by Nate Robinson—from 30 feet out as the buzzers moved the Knicks to their lowest score ever in a real-time/shot clock.

The Celtics, the top team in the NBA, led by 28 points in the second quarter and enjoyed a 64-38 advantage at halftime.

The margin went to 46 in the third quarter and reached a game-high 52 points with seven minutes left in the game.

Knicks coach Isiah Thomas described his team's chief performance into the most selfish he had ever seen in a team.

"I thought every single player was thinking about himself, as opposed to thinking about the team," Thomas told reporters.

"I can't never seen nothing like it," Knicks player Zach Randolph told reporters. "Never. Never. Never in my career."

Randolph and Eddy Curry took 12 shots in the first half and made only two. They finished the game with four points each. Randolph going 1-for-10 and Curry making just 2-of-12 field-goal attempts.

Stephon Marbury was equally ineffective, scoring four points on 2-of-8 shooting.

Jerry Stackhouse, with 11 points, finished in double figures for the Knicks.

The loss was their worst in 27 years. They made a mere 30.6 percent of their shots from the field.

"That was embarrassing. We was stymied it. No excuses. That was embarrassing. Unfortunately sometimes things like that happen," Knicks guard Jamal Crawford said. "But you have to bounce back. We haven't quit on the team. It was just a bad game."

"I don't know where this came from. I definitely did not see this game coming," Celtics coach Doc Rivers added. "This was not a good night."

The Celtics began the third quarter with an 11-0 run and it was then on. It's a matter of how long and by how much they would run.

"It's very tough, it's real tough to go through that," Randolph said. "It's a long season but to play like that, I don't know what to say."

"We played horrible. That's the bottom line," Knicks forward Quentin Richardson said. "Taking nothing away from them but at the same time we played horrible."

Boston, which improved to a league-best 12-2, led by as much as 92-43 in the fourth quarter, the club's biggest lead at any point in any game in seven years. The Knicks fell to 4-10 overall and 0-7 on the road.

Kevin Garnett played just 22 minutes and scored eight points.

In Oakland, California, Baron Davis scored 27 points and spearheaded Golden State frontline held Yao Ming in check, helping the Warriors trounce the Houston Rockets, 113-94, for their eighth win in nine games after an 0-6 start.

Stephen Jackson added 18 points and Al Harrington had 16 for the Warriors (8-7), who became the fourth team in NBA history to post a winning record after losing its first six games.

Yao, through the 7-foot-6 he had a decided advantage over Harrington (6-9) and Andris Biedrins (6-11), he was unable to convert that into success on the court. He shot 4-for-12 and had five turnovers, finishing with 10 points.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 24 points and reserve guard Andre Vujanic dominated the fourth quarter, scoring 19 of his 22 points there and helping the Lakers to a 127-99 rout of Denver.

Reuters, AP/AFP

ADD THE numbers on the jersey of the New York Knicks' Jared Jeffries (left), Renaldo Balkman (middle) and Nate Robinson. That's how many points the Knicks were outscored by 52-9 before a 17-foot triple by Robinson carried them to a team-low-tying total.

BOSTON superstars Kevin Garnett (left) and Paul Pierce cannot be blamed for celebrating early. The Celtics took the New York Knicks out of contention even before halftime on the way to a crushing victory.

Russia pulls off Davis Cup final surprise

PORTLAND, OREGON—RUSSIA pulled a surprise at Thursday's draw for the Davis Cup final, leaving fourth-ranked Nikolay Davydenko out of the singles matches.

Davydenko—at the center of a gambling investigation—was subpoenaed to playing doubles with Igor Andreev, and captain Shamil Tarpischev picked Dmitry Tursunov and Mikhail Youzhny for singles.

Many expected Davydenko, as the highest-ranked player on the Russian team, to play singles in the competition, which runs Friday through Sunday at Portland's Memorial Coliseum.

Instead, Tursunov will face sixth-ranked Andy Roddick in the opening match Friday, followed by 13th-ranked James Blake against Youzhny.

Davydenko and Andreev are slated to play the top-ranked duo of Bob and Mike Bryan on Saturday. The singles opponents are reversed on Sunday.

"We have four strong players, be it for singles or doubles, so the choice was made for tactical reasons," said Tarpischev, who is known for his eccentric personality. "Davydenko is the highest-ranked player on the Russian team, so play singles in the competition, while I may change him tomorrow or the day at Portland's Memorial Coliseum.

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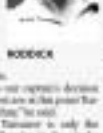

RODDICK

DAVYDENKO

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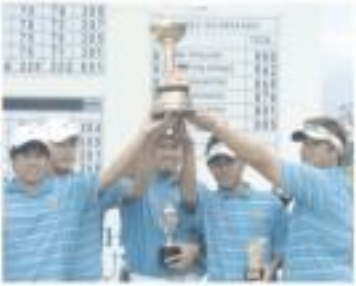
SPORTS

Thailand lifts Putra Cup as RP surge falls short



THE TEAM squad shows unbridled joy as (from left) Viorel Scubinschi, Thanakorn Kirnapala, Cesar Phelton Jordano, Viorel Chanvirakarn, Nawarit Apibhornvirat celebrate. Above, Mark Fernando shows his trophy.

By Ray Lazaro

[illegible] BORA, LAGUNA—HOST PHILIPPINES DEfended all odds to give Thailand a big scare, but couldn't go all the way.

The Filipinos moved into crucial 1.5-shoulder down after nine holes before losing their touch in the back nine as the Thais end away the Putra Cup—still a two-shoot win yesterday at The Country Club here.

Thailand's [illegible] 31 going out. Mark Fernando regained two of the last three holes and settled for a five-under par 68, while Jay Bayron capped a 69 with a bogey as the Philippines closed out with a four-round total 280 for an 8[illegible] total.

Thailand's Jazmin matched Bayron's 69 to complete the Filipinos' scoring. Bonnet Abdon failed to count with a 72.

The Thais, virtually untouchable in the first three rounds, struggled to a seven-over 217 but still grabbed their 12th Putra Cup title since 1989 with a 6[illegible] aggregate.

Thanakorn Kirnapala, who handily contributed for Thailand in the first three rounds, emerged the team's top scorer with a 72, the same output of Viorel Chanvirakarn, as Kirnkrit Apibhornvirat settled for a 73. Team leader Mahidol's 75 did not count.

The Thais, given up for lost despite surging to a tied second Thursday, got up to life with a sizzling front side. Fernando fired four birdies for a 31. Austin had a 33 and Bayron and Abdon each answered par 35.

But one-under output, coupled with the Thais seven-over total pushed the Filipinos alongside the leaders at the turn, inching RP hopes of ending a 19-year title drought to the event also known Southeast Asian Amateur Golf Team Championship.

But the nerves of the rampaging Thai squad held at the last hole with a rating of record pars.

Despite losing to team title, Bayron succeeded in hiking Thailand's runaway ball as top individual Quarry Quek battled the last three holes on the way to a tournament four-hit to cop Aphibornvirat as the countback for the individual crown.

Quek and Aphibornvirat rounded up with 284s while Fernando took third with a 287, edging Bayron in the countback.

Alcantara downs Croat, gains semis

By Ramon S. Arevalo

FOR FRANCIS CASEY ALCANTARA, REACHing the semifinals of the Manana International Junior Carnet Week 1 isn't enough. He wants the title, no less.

"I really want to be the champion this time," said the second-seeded Filipino after [illegible] his fourth year at a 6-2, 6-2 victory over eighth seed Nelson Lubicic of Croatia, 6-2, 6-2, yesterday and claiming a semifinals seat in the boys' singles at the Real Monte[illegible] tennis court.

The 15-year-old Alcantara, who ranks [illegible] in the recent age-group, 6-0, 6-0, in the second round of the nine-day-old tournament, outgeneraled the Croat with more ground strokes and upended the Filipino in keep the Philippine flag aflout.

Alcantara, the only Filipino survivor in the week-long event, will battle Australian Jesse White in today's [illegible] 4 matches.

White trapped into the semifinals with a 7-5, 6-1 victory over Filipino Joshua Daniel Heutal a 7-5, 7-6 (3) upender over Singaporean Sylvester Wee.

Alcantara's wins came after Roumar Jerem Mendoza thwarted Filipino Pablo Oliviani 2[illegible]-3, 7-5. The Filipino [illegible] the opponent's dynamic Australian Jaime Dudovich 6-0, 6-0, 6-0.

Top seed Huang Liang shied Taiwanese aficionado [illegible] Japanese Masato Shiga entered [illegible] 3-6, 6-1.

Huang topped Thailand's Adirek Bhandhumabutra, 6-3, 6-4, earlier while Shiga trapped Australian Benjamin Wagland, 6-1, 6-4.

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N040	₱ 580.00	D58	₱ 430.00
N40/T40N/N40Z	₱ 580.00	G65	₱ 640.00
N50/150M	₱ 630.00	G34	₱ 580.00
N50/25M	₱ 680.00	N100/60M	₱ 820.00
N70/30M	₱ 800.00	N120/30	₱ 1,360.00
DIN44	₱ 560.00	N150/40	₱ 1,280.00
DIN55	₱ 660.00	N200/80	₱ 1,820.00
DIN66	₱ 670.00	PT110	₱ 820.00

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6N4-2A	₱ 240.00	BS	₱ 50.00
6N4-4D	₱ 280.00	B4	₱ 50.00
6N6-3B	₱ 270.00	B5	₱ 50.00

Trade-in values as of November 19, 2007

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DEPOT

HEAD OFFICE

Pinoy chessers out to eclipse Chinese

By Ray Lazaro

[illegible] ARMADA, Philippines—Eight-time champion China [illegible] Philippines in the Asian Individual Chess Championship battle in Manila[illegible] City in September.

He competed in the World Chess Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia, where he was ousted by French GM Etienne Bacrot, 0[illegible]-1, in the first-rounder.

Ironically, he failed after his stint in the World Cup is Junior Girl Dhang Chess Olympiad.

He, again the top seed in the Pinoy Cup, landed second with Dhang Pirtip Dieo topping third.

The absence of GM Dhang Peptip, the winner of the first CMG Cup and the Asian Individual Chess Championships and Philippine International Open champion GM Wang Yue made the task of crashing the tournament's top three a bit easier for the Filipinos.

Servida-Rosales tops Founders Cup; Superal-Abdon up

CHITO HEVERA AND PAUL[illegible] Gee, Ilonia Rosales recently [illegible] final-round rivals [illegible] and [illegible] the overall [illegible] plum in the Orchard's Founders Cup in Tanauan, Cavite, recently.

Servida and Rosales rallied 66 points in aggregate play at Shad Cottages hosted by Gee's conditioner and with a last-hole [illegible] of 45 at the Player side tallied 133—the best among the 168 teams, which took part in the 12th edition of the members-guest tournament.

Angelito Nelson Aura Superal and Jolan Kay Abdon shared the limelight by winning the low gross side over then-city [illegible] King Sedanoza and Susan Flora.

Sedanoza and Flora [illegible] smack into the blustery winds and wound up with just 37 for 126. The pair lost in the count-back for second involving A.

John Baron Garcia and brother Ramon III took the Group 8 crown, Antonio Abad and Gil Jr. Group 9, captured the George B title, Jimmy Ilo and Ramon Zilmora clinched the Group C award and Joseph Perez and Gene Sebastian bagged the Group D plum.

Philip Bolano and Stephen Ong ended the special division.

The Servida pooled 12[illegible] to a two-point win over Marching Ari Rosario-Alfredo Perez, Abad Group beat Gee's team Bautista-Bolli, Mendiorio by three with 131; Ilo-Zilmora won by three over Christine Popp-Lobi Arguelles and Perez-Sebellon 132 topped Rotten-Ann Dawn Deciphello's one.

Princess received their trophies and prizes from Orchard [illegible] Vicente Santos and president Conrad Bautista.

Orchard general manager Rene Gonzalez also expressed his appreciation to the members of The Orchard and the [illegible] officials and staff for the success of the tournament, which finds Hunter-cash, IMPO, Ford Alabang, South Hills-Davao Technical Solutions, Inc., Bank of The Philippine Islands and Ilocano as major sponsors.

BUSINESS
Editor Raul D. Morales • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Teves: Transco bidding will push through

Concession, not assets, up for sale on Dec. 12

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CONTROVERSIES CURRENTLY HOUNDING IT WILL not deter the bidding for the 25-year National Transmission Corp. concession on Dec. 12, according to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves.

Thursday evening, he said government does not want to undermine that what would be auctioned on Dec. 12 was not the actual national electricity superhighway (Teves refused entry on Page B9.)

"Abroad is common sense tells us [since] nobody buys [it] just a concession. He'll still retain legal ownership of Transco. A lot of my colleagues in government don't seem to understand this," he said.

Teves added that based on the valuation study by the government's privatization officers, Transco should fetch a higher price than its latest valuation of about P2 billion.

(more)

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **PSE approves** Oriental Peninsula public offering /B2
■ **DA steps up** war vs smuggling /B8

DBP offers hedging facility to OFWs

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines is offering a facility to help overseas Filipinos who lose and their beneficiaries hedge their foreign currency earnings against the sharp peso appreciation.

"We have approved the DBP's hedging facility for OFWs," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a briefing Thursday night.

Tetangco said the policy-making Monetary Board has given DBP the authority to offer various derivatives instruments such as US dollar non-deliverable forwards, US dollar and peso currency options and US dollar-outright forwards.

A derivative is a sophisticated financial instrument whose value is derived from the value of an underlying good or index like the exchange rate, interest rate or stock prices.

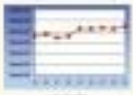
Provided rules on currency to purchase or sell a specified amount of foreign currency at a specified exchange rate that is settled on a specified future date. A non-deliverable forward, on the other hand, does not require actual delivery of the currency and only the difference is paid upon maturity. An option is a right to buy or sell a particular commodity or a specified price within a set time.

"It's an expansion of the hedging facility we offered exporters, (this time) to help OFWs," said DBP president Reynaldo David.

DBP plans to market the hedging instruments through the accounting agencies that deploy Filipino workers abroad.

The government bank's outstanding hedging contract with exporters now amount to about $200 million, rising from $170 million in October when the exchange rate broke into the P42.45:$1 level.

CURRENCIES



SOURCE: PHILIPPINE DEALING SYSTEM HOLDINGS

P42.71 = $1
as of 4 p.m., Nov. 30, 2007

P110.19 = ¥1
as of 4 p.m., Nov. 30, 2007

GOLD: $794.60/TR. OZ.
per London fixing, Nov. 29, 2007

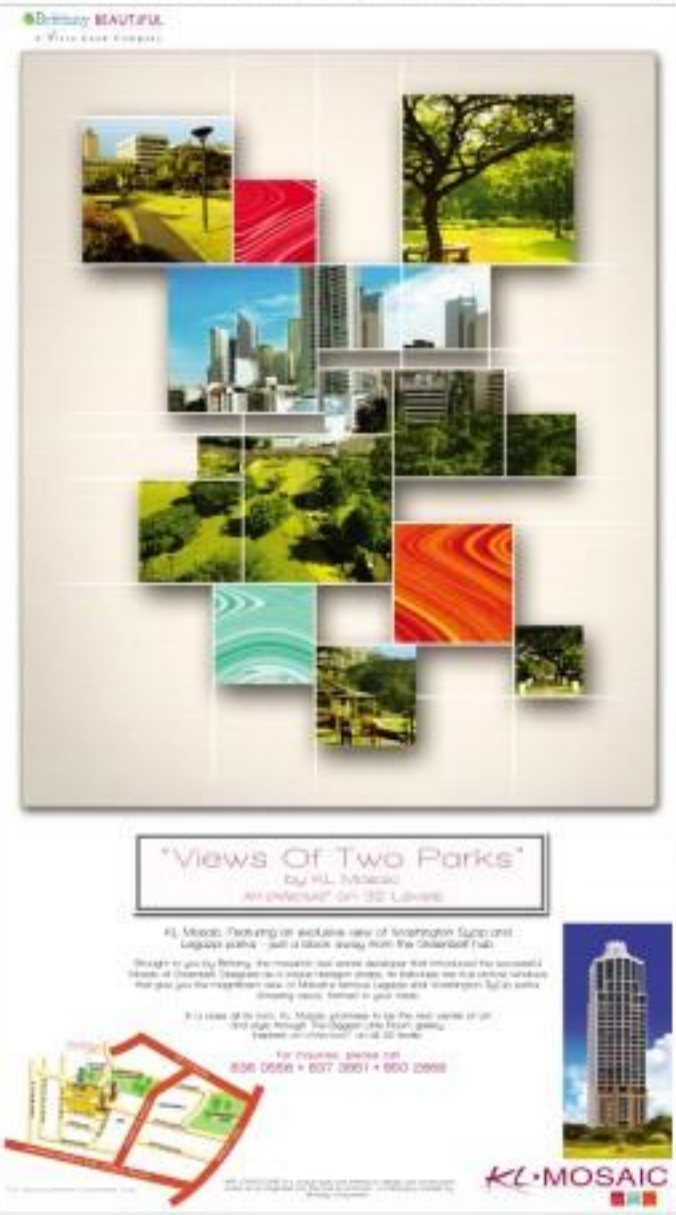
STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

SOURCE: PSE
(See more market figures on Page B4)

Markets closed Friday for holiday

PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL MARKETS WERE closed yesterday for a public holiday. Trading will resume Monday, Dec. 3. AP



PSE approves Oriental Peninsula public offering

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacsina

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK Exchange (PSE) has approved the plans by holding firm Oriental Peninsula Resources Group to pursue a public offering of shares by Dec. 18 to raise as much as P604 million in fresh capital for the company.

The company is offering 300 million shares at between P1.98 and P2.98 each.

In a prospectus filed with the PSE, Oriental Peninsula said its offer period would be conducted from Nov. 9 to 11. The listing date is tentatively set on Dec. 18. The final offer price will be set on Dec. 3.

The company's market capital is estimated at P2.07 billion to P4.23 billion after it lists a total of 1.452 billion shares, including the public offer shares.

The company has signed Atlas Fillipinas Investment Corp. as its underwriter or manager for the offering.

Proceeds from the stock issue will help fund capital expenditures and working requirements.

Oriental Peninsula owns 94 percent of Cityhead Mines and Development Corp., which has two mining rights in Palawan.

Philippine-premier Goldine Iron Ventures Inc. and Citihead Group Inc. own 30.5 percent and 15.9 percent in the company respectively.

There are 14 listed mining firms on the local bourse. These include Apex Mining Co. Inc., Atlas Mining and Industrial Corp., Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp., Benguet Corp., Dizon Copper-Silver Mines Inc., Geogreen Resources Inc., Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co., Manila Mining Corp., Nihao Mineral Resources International Inc., Nonoc Corp., Philex Mining Corp., Semirara Mining Corp., United Paragon Mining Corp. and Vulcan Industrial and Mining.

Last year, the mining and oil index was up by 43.5 percent following renewed interest in the sector.

Market capitalization—or the value of stocks based on their current market prices—of listed mining firms grew 58 percent to 642.7 billion in 2006 from its level in 2005. In the first seven months, the market capital of all listed mining firms shot up 74.5 percent to 974.6 billion.

The then-listed Mines and Geosciences Bureau said that it has hundreds of mining firms that are candidates for PSE listing.

MGB estimates that a total of $6.31 billion in mining investments can be raised up to 2010 involving 46 metallic mine projects. These consist of 12 copper and gold projects, 24 gold projects, three nickel-cobalt projects, one bauxite and one sulfur project.

IPVG enters another Internet venture

By Rica T. Obinguiña

LISTED FIRM IPVG CORP. IS DIVERSIFYING BY another venture with information technology company Infotech Asia Corp.

IPVG said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange that its board of directors has approved its proposal to invest in up to 49-percent equity in a subsidiary to be created by Infotech Asia.

IPVG said it would infuse $285,000 (P13.5 million) for an initial 40-percent interest in the Infotech subsidiary, which has yet to be incorporated.

"The new investment, such as the agreement by the parties, is still subject to the approval of the board of directors of the company," IPVG said.

Communications Road Shells Parks said in an interview that the new venture is separate from "Unlimited," an Internet cafe chain and network gaming center online operated by the same partners.

In August, IPVG and Infotech said they would jointly put up more than 100 Internet cafés online with in the next two years. Infotech president Dong Won Lee said each outlet would cost between P1 million and 1.8 million in development and will be located near schools in Metro Manila.

"Expect Unlimited to become a major driver in our Internet roll plans," said IPVG CEO Dong Jae Gustafson said.

"Once we have a flagship branch in Makati with around 100 computers, we aim to build more than 50 cafés per branch with high-end computers," he said.

The prior Unlimited's customers base, Lee said "we will upgrade our hardware and service regularly. We also plans to build regular Internet branch PC gaming tournaments."

Internet rates at Unlimited are flexible, ranging from P25 to P40 per hour in adaptation to participants' purchasing capability. Initially, the first five branches will charge P30 per hour.

Petrolift gets nod to sell shares

OIL AND GAS TANKER FIRM Petrolift Inc. has secured approval from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) for its initial public offer that may raise up to P3.3 billion to fund capital.

In a memorandum sibling circular disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Petrolift said it plans to sell between 497 million and 712 million new and existing shares at P4.90 to P7.65 each.

At the said offer, Petrolift will offer 328,263,500.00 million primary or new shares, and 136,7,203.8 million secondary or existing shares.

Petrolift aims to raise between P2.2 billion and 3.48 billion from the offering.

The offer period is set on Dec. 10-14 while the listing date is tentatively slated on Dec. 19.

Funds raised from the primary offer will be used to buy double-hull tanker vessels, upgrade existing tankers to non-single hull to double hull and acquire dry-bulk carriers.

Petrolift has tapped BDO Capital and Investment Corp. and 1st Capital Investment Corp. as lead underwriters for the planned IPO.

"Currently, we have the largest number of double-hull compliant tankers in the country today. The IPO would give us more flexibility to upgrade our existing fleet as well as carry it to other profitable and viable markets," said Clarissa Lessio-Amatorio, Petrolift chief financial officer.

Petrolift has grown from a one tanker barge with a two million-liter capacity in 2002 to a fleet of 16 ships. Current assets also stood at P4.7 billion with a more 970 million in 2002.

Gross revenues have grown at a compounded annual growth rate of 27 percent from the start of the company's operations to end-2006.

Petrolift earlier said it was preparing to refinance its newly listed double-hull vessel this month, ahead of an April 2008 deadline set by the state-led Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) to phase out single-hull tankers in transporting oil and petroleum products.

Petrolift said its double-hull vessel was one of the six tanker barges used to transport fuel oil and was being retrofitted to add an outer hull that provides an additional layer of protection against spillage resulting from a collision.

This will be the fourth double-hull vessel in Petrolift's fleet.

Under the new Marina order issued for call for maritime industry providers transporting oil products to convert their single-hull vessels to double-hull vessels or double-bottom vessels by April 25 next year, to compliance with international standards.

The decision to require maritime logistics providers to shift to double-hull tankers from single hulls is in line with the government's efforts to protect the Philippines' diverse marine environment, which has fallen victim to oil spillage.

Teves: Transco bidding will push through

Article page B-1

"The trend now is that the assets we're selling have fetched much higher prices. We still have to examine the conveyances, but that won't be until the day of the actual bidding. But if we go by the trend, I'm hopeful that the Transco bidding will be consistent with the pattern that we've seen so far," he said.

The auction for the Transco concession is currently in last stages, with two consortia calling it a three-way bid. Republican bidder filing names against Duty Free-owned Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. or PSALM and some of the agency's officials.

Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago, Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Jacoby Madrigal have raised the issue of conflict of interest, pointing out that PSALM president Jose Rizalino Ramos has to be close to Budget secretary Enrique Ralmos Jr., a close friend of Hon. Gentlemen Jose Miguel Arroyo and head of the consortium composed of Manila Doc Gold Resources Corp. and Sierra Gold Corp. of China.

The Manila Oro-Gold Gold consortium was one of the four groups qualified to submit final bids for the Transco concession on Dec. 11.

Madrigal also linked presidential brother Diosdado "Bubby" Macapagal Jr. and the Ahonlan family, known to be administration allies, to the Manila Oro consortium.

Responding to the conflict-of-interest issue raised against him, Ramos said PSALM was a collegial body and he was in no position to decide unilaterally for or against anyone, particularly when it comes to bidding matters.

On the Macapagal and Ahonlan issue, he said there was nothing in the documents required from the prospective bidders that linked the Macapagal to Macapagal to the Transco bid.

Oil prices drop below $91

SINGAPORE—OIL EASED BELOW $91 ON Friday after giving up all its gains in the previous session as a five-damaged Canadian pipeline and pipeline could resume operation within days.

Oil sender shed 6 cents to $90.91 a barrel by early morning afternoon.

It settled up 39 cents at $91.81 a barrel on Thursday after zipping as high as $95.17 earlier in the day.

"Traders are shaking their heads as oil prices rose almost $4 and then fell by the same level within 24 hours," said Tony Nunan, a risk manager for Mirabaud Corp.

"I still think this is a serious issue but reasons have dwindled to take a seat and see if/when after they took profits, but we may see oil prices go up again if the market sees a draw in inventories because of the incident."

An explosion along the Enbridge Pipeline, which supplies more than 10 percent of US crude imports, killed two workers and shocked oil crude flows on Wednesday.

But the operator said on Thursday that three of the four pipelines shut had already been restarted, and that the remaining line could resume to service within a few days, easing concerns of a severe supply disruption.

The US Department of Energy said it was prepared to open up the emergency crude stockpile to compensate for the disruption, but had yet to receive any requests.

Oil had risen more than 46 percent since August and has come close to breaking the $100 mark, driven by the weak dollar, concerns over shrinking supplies ahead of winter and speculative plays.

But prices have fallen back from the highs amid rising worries over the US economy, a rally in the dollar and expectations of a supply increase from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec).

Opec is set to meet on Dec. 5 in Abuja, with some members favoring a boost in production. Reuters

A VENDOR arranges cabbage at a vegetable market in Maoling, Jiangsu province. Worries that China's economy might be overheating are overblown, said a senior economist. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Stocks rise after Bernanke comments on US economy

Another cut in Federal rates expected

HONG KONG—ASIAN STOCKS hit two-week highs on Friday and the yen slipped after comments from Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke reinforced expectations of a further US interest rate cut, fuelling appetite for risk.

Those late views were set to lift stocks in Europe as well, with financial bookmakers expecting opening gains of up to 0.5 percent for all three major equity indexes.

Oil steadied near $91 a barrel after shedding overnight gains as worries about a less damaged Canadian pipeline system hampering operations within days, while gold traded below $800 an ounce, chilled by the fall in oil.

Stock investors took heart after Bernanke told the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce that a resumption in US economic growth and moderate outlook for the US economy, and the Fed would "have to remain exceptionally alert and flexible."

"Any indication of a rate cut is greatly received because if the US economy achieves a soft landing, the market can hold up and move ahead next year," said Hans Hsiaosu, head of investment markets research at Colonial First State in Sydney.

"We all know that the housing sector is going to continue and hard. The question is to what extent can you save the rest of the economy?"

Bernanke's comments came after weaker than expected new home sales and a surge in claims for new jobless benefits took the gloss off recent figures showing the US economy grew at 4.9 percent in the third quarter, the best performance in four years.

Japan's Nikkei average rushed 1.1 percent higher, while MSCI's measure of entire Asia Pacific stocks climbed 1.4 percent by early morning afternoon to two-week highs.

Markets had risen a day earlier after Fed Vice Chair Donald Kohn boosted rate cut talk by saying renewed financial market turmoil could slow the US economy and the Fed had to be flexible.

Despite the recent rise, the MSCI index is set to fall by about 3 percent in November, its biggest month by fall since May 2006, when it slid 5.6 percent.

The index was still down 9 percent from its Nov. 11 peak, but up 15 percent this year, more than three times the gains for MSCI's key world stock index.

Bank stocks, softened by investors on fears of credit-related losses, were generally firmer thanks to gains in Japan.

Japan's Mizuho Financial, South Korea's Shinhan Financial Group and Australia's Westpac Banking Corp. all rose more than 2 percent, but Citigroup fell 0.5 percent in Tokyo after reversing early gains.

Big miners fared better in line with gains in copper prices as investors bet that lower US rates would help boost economic growth and lift demand for industrial metals.

In Malaysia, plantation-to-energy group Sime Darby rallied as a 16-percent premium to its unlisted prize after a merger with two oil- or palm oil groups. It is now the world's largest listed palm oil company by value.

Against the backdrop of improving risk-taking appetite, the low-yielding pre-dipped.

The dollar jumped above 110 yen from an overnight low of around 109.45 yen, while the euro rose to 162.60 yen from Thursday's low near 161.80 yen.

Against the dollar, the single currency hovered near $1.4746-48 the overnight high of $1.4845.

Despite strength in equity markets, Japanese government bonds rose as the market took in cue from US Treasuries, which were boosted by weak US economic data overnight.

The yield on the 10-year benchmark Japanese government bond eased 1.5 ticks to 1.47 percent as a result.

Money markets were in a bit of a bind especially South Korea and India, where official curbs on foreign borrowing as well as precautionary rate reduction by banks on taking a toll. Reuters

Boebringer Ingelheim named top employer

INGELHEIM, GERMANY—BOEHringer Ingelheim has been named 2007's Top Employer in the pharmaceutical industry by Science magazine.

"This success has not been created overnight," said Mikael Dolsten, executive vice president for pharma research at Boehringer Ingelheim, highlighting the critical importance of innovation.

"Rather, it is a result of decades of Boehringer Ingelheim's dedication to research and innovation as the drivers for producing 'new and better medicines for patients'," Dolsten added.

Boehringer Ingelheim has been steadily climbing the rankings of Science Magazine, from 6th place in 2005 to 2nd last year.

This year, it was finally ranked the top firm.

The Boehringer Ingelheim group is one of the world's 20 leading pharmaceutical companies.

Based in Ingelheim, Germany, it operates globally with 137 affiliates in 47 countries, including the Philippines, and 39,000 employees.

Japan's economy gives mixed signs: prices up, housing dips

TOKYO—JAPAN'S ECONOMY LOST A mixed report card for October on Friday, with the government's strong core consumer prices had risen for the first time in 10 months—a positive sign—but those housing starts posted a double-digit drop.

Household spending was for the third straight month, but less than expected, while the jobless rate held steady at 4.0 percent.

The numbers come amid concerns that slower growth in the United States, a key export market, the yen's current appreciation and higher oil prices could stifle Japan's economy.

"Fears about a US economic slowdown have been growing," Economy Minister Hakuko Ota told reporters. The government will need to monitor "how each basic will affect consumer spending in the US and the Japan economy."

Analysts said the figures, while mixed, show that the world's No. 2 economy remains on the growth track, but that smaller companies may be feeling some pressure.

"The data on the whole still support the view that the economy is recovering moderately, but there other clouds on the horizon are still lagging," said Taro Saito, senior economist, NLI Research Institute. "Small- to-medium sized business are finding it difficult to generate a profit, and that's putting a limit on the room for improvement."

The yen's advance in September in core consumer price index in October was welcome as it was the first year-on-year increase since last December.

But the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said the gain was largely due to higher energy prices. Excluding food and energy, the CPI was down 0.3 percent in October, the same as in August and September.

Analysts said the latest figures don't show that Japan has fully emerged from deflation, a state where a continual decline in prices can erode corporate profits, paychecks and overall economic growth.

"The data are a reflection of rising materials prices across the globe, with the domestic economy showing few signs of inflation," said Atsushi Shikajima, chief economist at Mizuho Research Institute.

Surging oil prices—which have hit record highs near $100 a barrel in recent weeks—could hurt consumer spending as well as business investment here, economists warned.

Finance Minister Fukushiro Nukaga told reporters he planned to keep a close watch on both the impact of oil prices on overall price conditions and job conditions.

In other data released Friday, Japan's annual household spending rose an inflation-adjusted 0.6 percent in October from a year earlier, according to the ministry. It was the third straight month of increases but smaller than the 0.7 percent gain reported by economists.

Later Friday, the Land Ministry said housing starts fell 19.3 percent in October from a year earlier to 79,920 units. Though from September, the figure was 20.1 percent, the first increase since June. AP

IMF pessimistic on world economy

WASHINGTON—THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund on Thursday warned that persistent turmoil in financial markets and higher oil prices had cast a darker cloud over global growth prospects for next year.

Less than two months since its last health check on the world economy, the IMF is now likely to revise down its global growth estimate of 4.8 percent for next year, as risks identified in October had now materialized, IMF spokesperson Masood Ahmed said.

"We do think that recent turbulence in both oil and financial markets have further dampened the global outlook," Ahmed told a regular briefing for reporters.

"Some of the downside risks that we had identified [in October] have materialized," he said, adding: "We do see now the downside risks as being greater to the baseline scenario than we had and we will be likely drawing down that baseline scenario at the end of the year."

Ahmed said strong third-quarter economic activity in several advanced and emerging economies means global growth for 2007 could exceed the IMF's October estimate of 5.2 percent.

Still, he said higher global oil prices had an impact on consumers and in the United States had shown it was finely affecting inflation.

"The combination of rising food and fuel costs are exerting pressures on household budgets," Ahmed said, "and also means that central banks may find less room for manoeuvre in responding to weakening demand caused by the financial sector-driven concerns that higher fuel costs could later translate into second effects on inflation," Ahmed said.

He did not offer any new figures, saying those would be released in January in an update of the fund's bi-annual World Economic Outlook, which will be released to full in the spring.

Hans TOOSEC Ahmed said credit and money markets were still under stress and estimates of bank losses had risen.

The IMF's warning comes as the fallout of problems in the US sub-prime mortgage market appears to be deepening as banks in the United States and Europe have announced billions of dollars in mortgage-related losses while equities have fallen around the world.

He warned that the outlook could also change further if emerging market economies, which have been broadly unaffected by the turmoil that emerged out of the United States and spread into European markets.

Ahmed said tightening global credit conditions could present problems for ensuring economies down the road, especially in countries where rapid credit growth was financed by large-scale foreign bank loans.

He said the US Federal Reserve's rousseau rate cuts had been well timed so far and should support US growth.

"Actions by the financial market sources and the downside macroeconomic risks to growth and moderate core inflation readings for the past month, the Fed's actions [a] 75 basis point easing but so far been well timed and we think should support growth while maintaining low inflation," he said. Reuters

New round of bank branching liberalization OKd

Move seen to make credit accessible to small businesses

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas approved on Thursday a new wave of bank branching liberalization to benefit the underserved market, particularly small businesses and the entrepreneurial poor.

In 2005, the BSP implemented a selective lifting of the bank branching moratorium. This allowed the establishment of new bank branches except in certain restricted areas, such as Makati, Mandaluyong, Manila, Pasay, Pasig, Quezon and San Juan, which were reserved for the adequately served by existing branches.

"The recent move is expected to further enhance competition in the banking system and make banking services accessible to underserved areas," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said Thursday after the Monetary Board meeting.

BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Nestor Espenilla Jr. said the liberalization would have several components. The first allows microfinance rural banks with a minimum capital of P5.00 million to establish branches even in the restricted areas in Metro Manila.

Another key component of the liberalization, Espenilla said, allowed regular rural banks and thrift banks based outside Metro Manila to put up branches in restricted areas to establish a consolidation process.

Third, rural and thrift banks that meet the minimum capitalization requirement can now establish offices outside their area.

"For example, rural banks based in a small town may set up in a large city without having to meet the minimum capitalization for that city. This is to diversify their business of the bank," Espenilla said.

The fourth component is the liberalization of automatic or nondeposit-taking units of banks that are in good standing, recognizing that banks have become more innovative with some creating mini outlets called express banking centers for loan collection and disbursement.

"To be considered in good standing, they must meet the minimum capitalization and capital adequacy requirements and maintain a minimum bank rating.

Under the new rules, these banks will have to give the BSP a 30-day advance notice before setting up the mini outlets.

The fifth component of the liberalization would allow loan collection disbursement points associated with microfinance to operate on demand.

"And to hasten the processing of bank branches, we will setup some prerequisites like compliance to agri-agra and SME (small and medium enterprises) mandated lending," Espenilla said.

The BSP also scrapped the 200-meter minimum distance requirement between branches. In the past, the requirements was waived only in shopping malls or commercial center complexes, special request processing zones, public markets, fish ports, livestock/agriculture trading centers, Bureau of International Revenue collection of fines and industrial technology call parks.

Seaoil eyes IPO in Q1

INDEPENDENT OIL RETAILER player Seaoil Philippines Inc. said it was planning to go public in the first quarter of 2008 to raise fresh capital.

"Seaoil plans to sell between 20 percent and 30 percent of its capital stock to finance its nationwide expansion," said company president Romulo Clemente Yu.

Formed in 1997, Seaoil is the first independent oil firm to put up a gasoline retail station in the country following the deregulation of the local downstream oil industry. It now has 136 outlets nationwide.

Seaoil aims to put up more than 100 stations nationwide by 2011. More than 50 new stations will be opened in the next 12 months.

Since the deregulation of the local oil industry, 62 firms have entered the retail segment and invested heavily in retail outlets and storage facilities.

Based on Department of Energy statistics, gasoline stations of new players reached 900 in 2006.

Seaoil's main products are diesel, gasoline, kerosene, auto LPG and its pioneering biofuels blend.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEPS)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

NOTICE

Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SEC clears four Transco bidders

By Elizabeth Angeline Lucsan

THE LEGAL MESS OF TEAM SECO and Foreign Commission said the four bidders vying for the 25-year concession of National Transmission Corp. (Transco) were compliant with the country's foreign and local ownership laws.

This means the four groups are all qualified to participate in the bidding for the Transco concession on Dec. 12.

In four separate letters signed by SEC general counsel Wilfredo Grault Perez, the Office of the General Counsel told the prospective bidders that they had been deemed compliant with the requirements of the Philippine Constitution to operate a public utility franchise.

The first bidders are the consortium of Citadel Holdings Inc., Power Grid Corp. of India Ltd. and British company Avia Infrastructure; the group of San Miguel Energy Corp., Dutch firm TPG Asset, BV and Malaysian TNB Pte. Sdn. Bhd.; the consortium of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. (which is described with businessman Enrique Razon, Walter Brown and Phoebe Sevarenzo), Calaca High Power Corp. and Team Grid Corp. of China; and the group of Two Rivers Pacific Holdings Corp. of Manuel Pangilinan with Indy's Tenaga Nasional Berhad and Malakoff Corp. Bhd.

Under the Philippine Constitution, foreigners can own only up to 40 percent of a public utility in the country.

Article XII Section 11 of the Constitution further states that no franchise, certificate or any other form of authorization for the operation of a public utility shall be granted except to citizens of the Philippines or to corporations organized under the laws of the Philippines, of which at least 60 percent of the capital stock outstanding is held by citizens of the Philippines.

The SEC chairman forms part of the requirements imposed by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) on the prospective bidders.

In addition, the qualification of Two Rivers Pacific and Tenaga ere Elektrik was questioned. Maamalin V. Perez, a partner of Perez Golangco Madrigal Atchara Law Office, wrote PSALM on Nov. 9 saying Two Rivers could not be considered a Filipino corporation because its parent firm, Metro Pacific Investments Corp., which owns 99.99 percent of its capital, was not a Filipino company.

Perez cited a 2006 annual report of Hong Kong conglomerate Hutchison Whampoa Ltd. stating that it had a 95.9 percent "economic or voting interest" in MPIC. Perez alleged that if such is the case, MPIC and Two Rivers are both foreign corporations.

The lawyer further claimed that Two Rivers failed to take the ownership of Two Rivers in filings with the SEC by creating several layers of corporate entities and using freeplanes to make it appear that the owners of the capital of Two Rivers comply with the requirements of Republic Act of the Philippine Constitution."

PSALM's letter was to PSALM privatization committee chairPenilan Sarmiento and other concerned officials including Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Transco president Jesse Aguilas and SEC chair Fe Barin.

SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Editor Cesar D. Mangosong

Text us your feedback: [illegible]

RP to benefit from world's most advanced neuro center

Text and photos by Charles E. Bolton

FILIPINO PATIENTS REquiring complex and delicate neurosurgical treatment—like removing a tumor in critical or hard to reach part of the brain—may be glad to know they only have to take a three-hour flight to Singapore to get the best treatment possible.

Singapore General Hospital recently opened its Xitron Tech Point-National Neuroscience Institute Integrated Neuroscience Center, now regarded as the world's most advanced neurosurgical center.

How advanced?

"For the first time, a comprehensive range of the latest technologies in neurosurgery is available in one location, digitally integrated to provide doctors with immediate and more accurate information of their patient's neurological condition and enable them to seamlessly combine multiple treatments," described Prof. Tan Soo Yong, chief executive officer of both SGH and SingHealth, Singapore's largest healthcare group.

He announced that not only Filipino patients but also patients from abroad will be able to benefit from Xitron Tech Point-NNI Neuroscience Center.

Change paradigm

"The center should be a model for the rest of the world and promises to change the paradigm of how neurosurgeries work," said Dr. Ivan Ng, who heads the neurosurgery department at the SGH, the leading regional specialist centre for cutting-edge treatment, education and research in the neurosciences.

Ng, who is also the center's director for neurosurgery, said the center would be digitally linked to hospitals or medical centers in the world—including those in the Philippines—for information sharing.

Linked to any hospital

In the future, Tan said the center would be digitally linked to hospitals or medical centers in the world—including those in the Philippines—for information sharing.

THE ABILITY to get real-time information and be able to share it in all convenient is probably the best weapon any doctor could have.

According to BrainLAB CEO Stefan Vilsmeier, the Xitron Tech Point-NNI Integrated Neuroscience Center becomes the first to try the software, originally implemented "Integrated Operating Environment" that integrates individual BrainLAB technologies in a unique framework.

In the Xitron Tech Point-NNI Neuroscience Center, BrainLAB set up five digitally integrated operating rooms and one Hybrid, an advanced treatment device that uses beams that are shaped to match the exact contour of the tumor or lesion, effectively destroying them through radiation while reducing damage to surrounding healthy tissue.

"BrainLAB aims to complement the clinical skills of hospitals with the best technology available so that there is consistently improvement in quality of care. We are pleased to work with SingHealth and its institutions, NNI and SGH, to provide the best possible treatment for patients," Tan announced.

The funniest joke in the world

EUREKA!

Genevieve N. Lee-Chiong

DID YOU HEAR THE JOKE ABOUT the man who was proud when he completed a jigsaw within 30 minutes? After all, it said "five to six years" on the box.

Self-made man: Where are you from?

Barrow[illegible] I come from a place where we do as well our sentences with prepositions.

Self-made man: Okay, where are you from, jack—?

Why does these jokes make us laugh (or at least smile)? In his best-selling book "Quackology," multi-awarded British behavioral psychologist Richard Wiseman says that, many jokes have one thing in common—they make us feel superior. The taboo becomes the person in the joke (or we think we're better than the person). Or we may identify with a pompous figure (like the Barrow[illegible] boss) foolish, which by the way, is one reason politicians are often the butt of jokes.

The Greek philosopher Plato believed that the origin of humor lay in misfortune or laughter like "the way of wit is simple in an ironical jungle duel." In the Middle Ages, deserved and unmerciful people thought it might be dangerous to do so to an ill-tempered executioner. Today the superiority theory is also aimed by two groups of people, such as Americans laughing at the Polish, and everyone laughing at blondes.

Battle of the sexes

In 2001, Wiseman and his team conducted a study to discover the art of really funny for laughter. They solicited thousands of jokes from the public, and asked people to rate how funny the jokes were. The superiority theory rears time and again, as in the battle of the sexes, where more women than men found jokes putting down men funny, such is the following:

A husband stopped on a scale that tells fortune and weight. "Listen to this," he told his wife, showing her the reading. "It says I'm energetic, bright, and a great person." "Yeah," her wife muttered, "and it has your weight wrong, too."

But surprisingly, more men than women found jokes putting down women funnier. According to psychologist Sigmund Freud, all of us have sexual and aggressive thoughts, but society does not allow us to express them openly. So we find disturbing in our unconscious, where they emerge only through slips of the tongue, dreams, or jokes. Freud believed that jokes act as a release for the hidden anxiety we feel.

Thus, older people found jokes about getting older funny, such as the following:

A man in his late sixties suspects that his wife is going deaf, so he decides to test her hearing. He stands on the opposite side of the room from her and asks, "Can you hear me?" No answer. He moves halfway toward her and asks, "Can you hear me now?" She answers, "It sounds right beside her and asks, "Can you hear me now?" She replies, "For the third time, yes!"

I have to admit that I found this joke very funny, and so did my 9-year-old son. Whereas would explain it by saying that both of us are probably older than our years.

Freud's theory of anxiety also accounts for why most of us like the word joke, since it helps us deal with fear of death.

The theory tells the same by has good news and bad news. The bad news? The man has a once and inevitable demise. The good news? "Still," says the doctor, "we are going to name it after you."

Paradox joke does not exist

After doing statistical analyses, brain imaging scans, and interviews, Wiseman finally announced the world's funniest joke, which surprisingly, was a letdown for us. (It involved murder, and for the sake of child readers, I will not divulge it here. Interested readers should get the book, printed Wiseman agrees, calling the winning joke "the world's funniest ... that makes everyone smile but very few laugh out loud."

After a winding search for the funniest joke, Wiseman says, "I dont believe it exists. People find different things funny, but there is no one joke that will make everyone guffaw. One lesson you don't work that way." What is important is that laughter has been shown to help us lead longer and[illegible] lives.

"Quackology: The Curious Science of Everyday Lives," by Richard Wiseman, is available at Powerbooks.

Stroke prevention campaigns

By Rolando Carillo, MD

Contributor

MEDICAL FILES

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE HAS BEEN established as a major risk factor for stroke and the unfortunate thing about it is that most hypertensive patients have no symptoms.

The statistics are grim:

- Less than half of hypertensive patients are aware that they have high blood pressure.
- Only about a quarter are taking antihypertensive medications.
- Only about 10 percent, or even less, have adequately controlled high blood pressure.

Treating hypertension

What is quite tragic is that many hypertensive patients are aware that they have high blood pressure, but cannot they have no symptoms, they take their hypertension for granted by many of those poisonous victims of the "silent killer" are not motivated to strong medication to take their medicines religiously to make sure that their blood pressures are controlled to optimal levels.

Not until they develop a serious stroke or a heart attack do they realize what hypertension has changed for their hypertension has cost them. And by then, it's too late already.

The effective strategy therefore is quite obvious. If we can only make the 90 percent with untreated or uncontrolled hypertension aware of the risk they are unduly exposed to, we can significantly reduce the incidence of stroke and other cardiovascular complications in our country.

Increase awareness

Hopefully, the Utrecks campaign, spearheaded by Dr. Jerry Mercado and Cecilio, and the Metrobank campaign against hypertension campaigns collaborated in by the Philippine Heart Association, Stroke Society of the Philippines, Philippine Society of Hypertension and Themphacem, will significantly increase awareness on hypertension and stroke among Filipinos and stem the tide of what would produce a population with many disabled stroke victims.

According to the World Health Organization, 15 million people worldwide will suffer from stroke this year. Five million will die and another five million will be permanently disabled. In the Philippines, stroke affects 300 out of 100,000 Filipinos or roughly half a million Filipinos, according to Dr. Ramon on his study published in The Philippine Journal of Neurology. However, more recent epidemiologic data may be a problem.

At risk for stroke

"There are less than 300 neurologists in the country or one for every 300,000 patients. This puts many Filipinos at risk for stroke and its life-threatening complications," explains Dr. Johnny Lukas, newly elected president of the Philippine Neurological Association.

Over an individual develops signs and symptoms of stroke or transient ischemic attack, he should not delay going to the hospital. Dr. Ramon is of the reason to prevent more severe complications. The symptoms of stroke are sudden weakness of the facial muscles, arm or leg, usually on one side of the body.

One may also feel sudden numbness on one side of the body, confusion, difficulty in speaking or understanding speech, blurring of vision in one or both eyes, difficulty in walking, dizziness, loss of balance or a severe headache.

The Philippine Stroke Council is encouraging the establishment of specialized acute stroke units in all tertiary hospitals to make sure that stroke patients are promptly and adequately treated with medications and interventions that can prevent more severe, irreversible damage to the brain.

Currently, there are about 16 of these acute stroke units nationwide. Hopefully, more medical centers will have such facility, which will be a big boost in treating stroke patients and preventing its complications.

Weight-loss surgeons as 'tourist destinations'

By Tessa R. Salazar

LIPOSUCTION—A COSMETIC procedure wherein fats in the abdominal wall are removed—may have become so in demand in Metro's populations that are seeing a recent number of overweight and obese citizens, tourists are sparing no expense to undergo such a procedure anywhere they can.

Philippine surgeons, noting the extent many liposuction clients would be willing to undergo just to shed off their unwanted fatty ones and for all, have offered a better alternative: bariatric surgery. And hopefully, when clients see the results, they'll add impetus weight-loss surgeons in their country "leaps."

Bariatric surgery is now being promoted by proponents as the most effective treatment for morbid obesity. It involves surgically limiting the capacity of the gastrointestinal tract, primarily the stomach, to take in food and thus create early satiety, reduce malabsorption and delay gastric emptying time. All of these would result in the reduction of weight and waist-abdominal fats.

There have been 500 bariatric surgery procedures done in the Philippines for the past three years. The numbers of operations has increased given to make bariatric surgery to the country another "tourist destination."

Weight-loss surgery

Dr. Ray Mathew P. Santos, president of the Philippine College of Surgeons, said bariatric surgery has been a strong suit of trained local surgeons. Bariatric, who is also the president and CEO of the Philippine Obesity Control Surgery Team, revealed that this weight-loss surgery is one of the reasons his group is coordinating with the Department of Tourism.

Santos said the competition in medical tourism in the Asia-Pacific region has been steadily intensifying. Bariatric surgery, Santos stressed, would give the country an edge over, for instance, Thailand, which is more known for its cosmetic surgery industry.

Bariatric surgery also adds medical significance for patients in the long run, Santos said, as liposuction is not as effective a treatment for obesity as the long way as bariatric surgery is.

Big advantage

The cost of undergoing bariatric surgery here is also a big advantage. "Bariatric surgery cost, which is 50 percent less in the Philippines than in the United States, can be packaged with tours," Santos said.

Dr. Ana Antonio M. Salud, chief, minimally invasive surgery section of the Medical City, said there are less than 15 surgeons specializing in bariatric surgery, but few from the Philippine Obesity Control Surgery Team have done the most procedures in the Philippines.

He disclosed that there are two groups of bariatric surgeons in the country. The majority of operations are done by the group in St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City, while another group operates in Cebu.

"Compared to other countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, the Philippines seems to have shown good results," Santos observed.

Unlike "conventional" tourists who seek tropical climes only during winter holidays, or seek breaks, medical tourists are not seasonal visitors. Obesity, in particular, is not a seasonal disease, said Salud. But bariatric surgeons' practice patients to come in year-round.

The digital way to beat breast cancer

MORE AND MORE WOMEN ARE BEING diagnosed with breast cancer, and yet living long, productive lives. These women are diagnosed with breast cancer, undergo surgery either with mastectomy or with lumpectomy (removal of the malignant tumor with remains of most breast tissue), undergo chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy (then live many years without any other evidences of disease save a surgical scar.

Those women literally beat cancer because of one major factor: early detection. When breast cancer is caught and treated before the cancerous cells spread to any lymph node, almost all women survive beyond 5 years. When caught after the cancer has spread to at least three lymph nodes, up to 92 percent of patients survive for 5 years or longer.

The mammogram has been pivotal in early breast cancer detection. The mammogram is a special X-ray image of the breast. It can detect small lesions even before they grow big enough to be felt by hand. The mammogram can also detect early and minute signs of breast cancer, such as microcalcifications (calcium deposit within breast tissue, with or without the presence of a mass).

THE NEW St. Luke's digital mammography machine

CarePlus

Angelo Palmones

Studies show that a well-conducted mammogram can reveal breast changes two years before a patient or a physician can find a lump manually. Women over the age of 40 should get a mammogram yearly, as well as those younger than 40 who are considered especially at risk, e.g., those with a strong family history of breast cancer.

Clearer images with less radiation

Like most things in today's trend, the film-based mammogram has made the digital turn. Operationally, digital mammography is very similar to conventional mammography, but most of the processes involved have been computerized and automated.

Digital mammography records the breast image digitally into a computer instead of on photographic film. The image is captured using a special electronic X-ray detector, rather than screening the image into a digital picture. The digital picture can then be viewed on a computer monitor.

The latest technology in digital mammography in the Philippines uses an amorphous selenium (a-Se) photoconductor-based Full-Field flat detector. This unit, housed in the St. Luke's Breast Center, also features a tungsten (W/Rh) X-ray tube. The machine automatically selects the best settings and the lowest dose according to individual breast characteristics.

"The digital technology fully automates almost all aspects of the mammography process. The system is so sensitive that less radiation is used. It automatically calculates the exact amount of radiation that is required to the quality of the breast image is optimized, while avoiding unnecessary radiation overexposure," says Dr. Alejandro Rivera, head of the St. Luke's Breast Center. "The breasts receive up to 50 percent less radiation, and results in clearer images and improved resolution," Dr. Rivera emphasized.

St. Luke's Breast Center mammograms are interpreted by Dr. Barbara Helen Perez and Dr. Mercy Go-Santi. Both trained in breast mammography at Huntsville Imaging Center (Binggold, Georgia), the best imaging center for 2007 as awarded by the American College of Radiology. They also trained in Australia, Texas and Seattle, Washington under Dr. Linda Tabar, a world-renowned Swedish mammography radiologist.

Optimal compression

Using digital also offers other advantages. Since digital mammography machines feature a computerized compression system that prevents overcompression and unnecessary pain or discomfort during the procedure. The system compresses only as long as the breast is soft and pliable, and stops as the patient feels optimal compression.

Digital technology also improves and speeds up access to mammogram results. It allows automation of patient registration, integration with relevant examinations (such as ultrasound and breast MRI results), presenting of image parameters for image acquisition, image processing, and image quality check.

"Digital mammography can also be seamlessly integrated with a Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS), if the medical center has this capability. PACS is a network that stores mammogram images and or other imaging modalities, such as X-ray, ultrasound, CT scan or MRI. They can then access these images from a remote computer, and can be simultaneously accessed by many doctors.

For feedback, please e-mail the Healthcare Technology and Outcomes Information Bureau at tsapiet@hsph.com.

DIGITAL mammography improves breast imaging while using less radiation.

ST. Luke's breast radiologist Dr. Mercy Go-Santi, who together with Dr. Barbara Helen Perez, trained in breast mammography at Huntsville Imaging Center (Binggold, Georgia), the best imaging center for 2007

KIDS QUIZ

By Emman Cano

Conquer your fears, kiddo!

DID YOU KNOW THAT INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR DAVID BECKHAM HAS a morbid fear of birds? Would you believe renowned film director Steven Spielberg is terrified of insects?

Each one of us has his or her own share of phobias toward animals, insects and even or anything under the stars. Hollywood film star, and once considered the sexiest man alive, Brad Pitt fears dumbo.

Let us check your knowledge on the science of phobias. Match the phobia on the left with the thing being referred to on the right.

Phobia	Thing feared of
1. Achluophobia	a. Cancer
2. Acrophobia	b. Tourists
3. Agoraphobia	c. Blood
4. Algophobia	d. Needles
5. Androphobia	e. Lightning
6. Ailurophobia	f. Bosses
7. Batrachophobia	g. Pain
8. Bloodophobia	h. Open spaces
9. Brontophobia	i. Heights
10. Carcinophobia	j. Darkness

Score: 1-4 Good; 5-7 Very Good; 8-10 Excellent

ANSWER: 1-J; 2-I; 3-H; 4-G; 5-F; 6-A; 7-B; 8-C; 9-E; 10-D

Big Organizations Wage War Against The "Silent Killer"

The fierce war against hypertension rages as theraphanna, cardiovascular (CVD), professionals (PSH), Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH), and Stroke Society of the Philippines (SSP) in generating public awareness against the serious consequences of not detecting high blood pressure early.

A memorandum of agreement (MOA) signifying the joint meetings, was signed between the presidents of the three medical societies namely: Dr. Rhea Modelo of PAH, Dr. Lolita Bilonga of SSP, and Dr. Rafael Castillo of PSH, together with theraphanna Gerard Manrique and Dr. Ian Garrupit. The MOA signing was held at theraphanna's office at the Bonifacio Global City, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, last October 25, 2007.

With the tagline "Bilisanong pag-iingat sa hypertension," the three-day campaign seeks results on hypertension which causes delay in diagnosis and neglect in the treatment. It emphasizes that many patients with hypertension have no symptoms for many years, and many patients discover it too late. "A stroke or heart attack may be the first manifestation of an elevated blood pressure," says Dr. Castillo.

Every year, thousands of Filipinos become victims of heart attack, stroke and other complications caused by hypertension. The results is life-threatening disease that requires prompt detection," Dr. Modelo stresses.

In line with the campaign, a television commercial was launched on November 7, 2007. The said TV commercial, which will be aired the whole month of November, during primetime at ABS-CBN 2 and GMA 7 TV stations, features the presidents of PSH, PAH, and SSP as they give messages about hypertension awareness, and the need to consult one's physician. Radio programs and newspaper print ads conveying the same messages will also be run on all nationwide.

Hypertension or high blood pressure is known as a "silent killer" because majority of patients do not feel any symptoms. "Since hypertension has no set symptoms, the not really detected," says Dr. Modelo. He adds however, that determining the blood pressure will take only a few minutes, and one should make an effort to have its blood pressure checked.

Hypertension usually coexists with other medical problems such as diabetes, cholesterol problems and obesity. The presence of hypertension and these other risk factors increases the cardiovascular risk five fold even in the absence of symptoms.

The good news though, according to the three specialists, is that hypertension can be controlled. "Coping with hypertension requires the right treatment, medicine and lifestyle changes," says Dr. Modelo. He warns however that "some remedies from your friends' neighbor is not enough to manage hypertension."

So don't take advice from just anyone. Go to a real doctor," the three society presidents chorus.

For more information, one may call the Bilisanong pag-iingat hotline: 1-800-10-5-HEARt (1-800-10-5-432728).

RP to benefit . . .

From page B6

and 2020, in establishing this integrated neuroscience center, which will help them achieve a new level of integration and patient care that leverages on medical expertise and the most advanced digital technology for better clinical outcomes," Wiemeier said.

Cutting-edge medical tech

Founded in 2000, BrainLAB specializes in the development, manufacture and marketing of cutting-edge medical technology for radiosurgery/radiotherapy, orthopedics, neurosurgery and ENT.

Among the products developed by BrainLAB are software and hardware components for image-guided surgery and radiotherapy, integrated systems for stereotactic radiosurgery as well as fully integrated operating room solutions.

"A number of hospitals in the Philippines already have BrainLAB technologies and the fact that the world's most advanced facility is now in Singapore is still only for a matter of time before a similar hospital or center in the Philippines will follow the footsteps of RGH," he said.

The Rhea Tech Post-NSO-integrated Neuroscience Center was made possible through a $13.5 million (P567 million) donation coming from the foundation of the late philanthropist Rhea Tech Post.

BUSINESS

DA steps up war vs smuggling

Coordinated campaign seen to spur RP farm sector growth

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ARTHUR C. YAP has directed the Department of Agriculture agencies to step up their campaign against the smuggling of meat, poultry and dairy products in the country.

The directive—which was issued last week in the Livestock Development Council, Bureau of Animal Industry, National Meat Inspection Services, Philippine Carabao Center and the National Dairy Authority—would ultimately spur growth of the country's farm sector, Yap said.

Current efforts to curb smuggling have already shown a drastic reduction in the smuggling of meat and meat products this year, according to records from the NMIS.

For instance, the volume of smuggled meat products seized has dropped significantly to 310.45 metric tons, so far this year, from 273.71 metric tons in 2006, as a result of coordinated efforts by the DA's regulatory agencies.

On the part of BAI, its Veterinary Quarantine Service has adopted stringent measures, such as full documentation, inspection and examination of all frozen meat and meat products referred to by the Bureau of Customs to prevent smuggling.

Also, the NMIS is working closely with the VQS and the livestock and poultry sectors for the strict monitoring of cold storages, meat processing plants, supermarkets and other meat outlets to detect the presence of smuggled products.

The LDC, on the other hand, has been assisting livestock associations in spreading awareness and information on how to curb smuggling of meats and meat products sold in their turfs.

"The agreement among the DA, Department of Finance and the BOC forged last November to strengthen collaboration efforts against the smuggling of agricultural products has proven to be key in curbing this illegal activity," Yap said.

AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur C. Yap inspects a proposed processing plant site for the Pork in A Box project in Pontevedra, Capiz in Region 6. The region is considered to be the island top producer of hogs in the country. The project aims to improve the pork marketing system in the region and help backyard hog growers market their produce.

Producers Bank to get ₱120M from Landbank

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has approved the Land Bank of the Philippines' ₱120-million investment in Producers Rural Banking Corp., one of the nation's largest countryside lenders.

The private placement shall be made via an exclusive issuance by Producers Bank of a 10-year subordinated debt paper to Landbank. The placement will qualify as tier 2, or supplementary capital, to boost Producers bank's capital adequacy ratio to about 15 percent from 13.47 percent as of end-October.

Landbank president Gilda Pico said the bank was keen on investing in well-managed rural banks, which serve as the government bank's priority market.

In 2006, Producers Bank was a recipient of Landbank's "Hall of Fame" award for continuing to be an outstanding countryside financial institution.

Proceeds from the Landbank's private placement will be used to expand the rural bank's branch network. Producers Bank has 39 branches at present, but it has authority from the BSP to establish five more in Bogtong E (Legazpi Valley) and R (Central Luzon Clarkas) the year's end.

With a total of 44 branches operating by the end of the 2007, Producers Bank will have the largest branch network in Luzon and the second largest nationwide among the country's 757 rural and cooperative banks.

Recently, the bank secured approval from the BSP to organize a foreign currency deposit unit. This will allow the bank to engage in foreign exchange denominated transactions, such as accepting foreign currency deposits and granting of foreign currency loans.

As of end-October, Producers Bank's total assets amounted to ₱1.84 billion.

BIR, LGUs ordered to share information on taxpayers

By Michaella V. Ramos

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has directed the Bureau of Internal Revenue and treasurers of local government units to share taxpayers information with each other in a move aimed at better detecting tax cheats both in the national and local levels.

The President, upon the request of local treasurers, has issued Executive Order No. 646, ordering the BIR and local governments to provide each other data relevant to the conduct of tax audits.

Information that may be shared include gross income of taxpayers, volume of production of corporate entities, amount of receipts cared and past tax payments made.

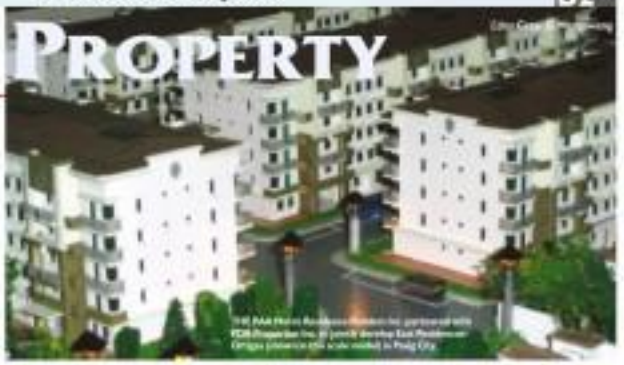
The Philippine Association of Local Treasurers and Assessors (Philtrat) earlier said that there are discrepancies in the taxpayers records handled by the BIR and LGUs. Some taxpayers accurately declare their income to LGUs, but underdeclare the same to the BIR. Some pay the right taxes to the BIR but some are not complying with their local tax obligations, the group said.

Philtrat had long been requesting the BIR to share information on taxpayers in order to enhance their taxation capabilities and increase revenue collections.

But the BIR was hesitant because it is prohibited by law to divulge such information.

Later, the BIR said it has a presidential order would allow it to share taxpayers information with LGUs.

"The Bureau of Internal Revenue and the local government units can help each other in their collection efforts through accessibility of information ... on their respective taxpayers," the President said in the executive order.



Helping city dwellers get their ideal home

By Charles E. Bolson

A SIZEABLE SEGMENT OF the workforce in most cities around the world live in the vicinity of their office address.

Interestingly, it's the other way around here in the Philippines where majority of the country's wage and salary earners reside several kilometers away from their place of work.

"There is nothing wrong here, except that a huge part of their income goes to travel expenses or in the maintenance of their transport vehicle. Budget for fuel included," said Ace Colleja, Subdivision and Housing national president who is also president of a newly formed outfit, the PAS Metro Residence Builders Inc.

Productivity is also hampered as these people – potential homebuyers – are also affected by the increasing cost of transportation as well as the worsening traffic situation.

Attractive housing package

"Instead of letting them live with their relatives living within the area of their office, why not offer them attractive housing package that would reduce their commuting time and at the same time lessen their commuting costs?" he asked.

Since its establishment in March last year, PAARHB has cultivated itself to be the market leader in the affordable medium-rise condominium market in Metro Manila as well as in other metropolitan areas in the Philippines.

Because of the scarcity of space within these areas PAARHB believes that investing on vertical housing developments will prove attractive to a huge segment of the country's populations who work in the cities.

Within Metro Manila

"What these people need are residential developments that are affordable and at the same time located within Metro Manila," Colleja said.

Colleja reported that based on a 2005 survey done in Metro Manila, there is a significant portion of the population whose annual income ranges from P108,000 to P1 million (a monthly income of P25,000 to P83,333) of which 20 percent have no own house and instead live with a relative.

"These group will initially be our target market," said Gary de Guzman, PAARHB strategic marketing services group manager.

The company's first move is the purchase of more than 500 foreclosed Home Development Mutual Fund units at Indio Cichusin in Novaliches, Quezon City which they refurbished and later offered to homebuyers at prices ranging from P498,000 to P609,000.

The PAARHB is also targeting Quezon City, Mandaluyong City, Marikina City, Parañaque City and even Metro Cebu in cities for its next projects, all with prices below P1 million.

Partnership

Last week, PAARHB partnered with PDH Properties Inc. to jointly develop East Residences Ortigas, a mid-rise condominium development in Ortigas avenue extension in Pasig City (near Ever Gotesco Mall).

The 0.246-sq-m property will offer 415 units (having 30 sq.m floor area) with cost ranging from P750,000 to P900,000.

"This is a significant partnership for PAARHB as the company will be able to entice more members of the workforce, middle-income earners and even the families of overseas contract workers and returnees to invest in their own home," said PAARHB Chair Rosario Alvarez.

Together with Colleja, Alvarez signed up with PDH President and CM Ephraim Santillan Jr., EVP Jesus Yan-hornung and Supports Services Group Head Illuria Angela Padilla.

The season of lights

COMPACT fluorescent lamps are three to four times more efficient than incandescent bulbs in terms of energy use. More of its electricity consumption is turned into useful light.

OUR LIGHTING COSTS WILL GO UP this Christmas season. This is partly because we shall be having longer nights and shorter day time. Another reason for the rise in the electricity bill is the accompanying festivity of the coming season of joy.

There is much room to use increased lighting cost in this season of lights. We also must take a hard look at the impact of our use of electric light on global warming and climate change. The more electricity we use, the more fossil fuel we need to burn in the power plants. Therefore, more green house gases will be emitted.

This second cost we cannot afford to pay. We have fewer years than the fingers in one hand to slow down the rate of global warming. We all know that the culprit for global warming is carbon dioxide emissions.

Shift to efficient electric lights

The Department of Energy or DOE is now shifting from the use of inefficient electric lights or IELs. The DOE is also beating the drums for high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps, ballasts and energy-efficient luminaires. We have more than enough energy-saving fluorescent lamps or CFLs.

Through its agency the Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Project or PELMAP, the DOE aims to overcome the barriers to widespread use of efficient electric lighting systems. They are updating policies, standards and guidelines on lighting applications. The Philippine National Standard was set up which includes the Minimum Energy Performance Standards on lighting products.

PELMAP is building stronger institutional and technical capacity for public and private sector involvement in efficient lighting use. The DOE Lighting Appliances Testing Laboratory has procured modern lighting.

Intense information, education and communication campaigns are being undertaken among lighting industry regulators, manufacturers, suppliers and consumers, etc. The use of IELs is brought down to public and private buildings such as Taiwan's Ridings Chamber of Commerce and Industry and local government units.

PELMAP is developing EE standards for imitation in electrical engineering and professional courses. The Board of Electrical Engineering and the Commission on Higher Education recently approved the inclusion of Illumination Energy Engineering as a three-unit subject in Electrical Engineering in the country. Work is underway with the department of Trade and Industry and Education to campaign for energy efficiency among high school students.

Ordinary and the large distribution utility companies in the country are required to be promoting the use of ELIs. It is studying the use of efficient roadway lighting with the LGUs.

The "Fair Saw" program of the DOE is being conducted in cities since in Pasay, Manila, Pasig, Quezon City and Cebu for a change from incandescent bulbs to CFLs, from fat linear fluorescent lamps to slim, tube LEs, triphosphor coated, from conventional magnetic ballasts to low-loss electronic ballasts and electronic ballasts, and the luminaires.

Why CFLs?

Compact fluorescent lamps are three to four times more efficient than incandescent bulbs in terms of energy use.

More of its electricity consumption is turned into useful light. While an incandescent bulb converts only 20 percent of the electricity it uses to useful light, CFLs convert 80 percent of the electricity it uses to useful light. CFLs also last four to eight times longer compared to incandescent bulbs.

Choosing lighting products

Consumers should look well at the label of lighting products. We have to look for the Philippine Standards (PS) mark for locally-made products, and the Import Commodity Clearance (ICC) mark for imported lighting products for legitimacy of the product in terms of compliance with government standards.

We also have to look for the yellow or energy-label quide-using the energy performance characteristics of the lighting product, especially for CFLs and electromagnetic ballasts. The yellow label bears the DOE and EU labels, and is useful for comparing lighting products that suit our needs. It includes light output in lumens, power consumption in watts, efficacy in lumens/watt and average life in hours.

Lighting cost of an average building (added up 20 percent) is relatively expensive. It is higher in homes. It is said that if one in every 7.6 million households will switch to the use of CFLs from incandescent bulbs, the installation of a 1,000 MW power plant will be deferred each year. That is an annual savings of $200 million. If we list the objective of the DOE at the end of the program, we expect to earn electricity savings of 2,100 GWh equivalent to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of 497 Gg CO_2.

for comments or inquiries, email arnulfofajnzo@ymail.com.

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Armando de Armas

CROWNASIA'S RENOIR TOWER AT PRESIDIO

Stylish, condo living within your means

A TASTE of San Francisco at Presidio's Renoir Tower

IN THE HEART OF THE METRO lies an oasis where one can wake up to amazing views. Individual towers may still be 15 minutes away from the Makati Central Business District. CrownAsia, the country's premier developer of master-planned, themed enclaves with building style while remaining attainable for Filipino families, recently launched its latest addition to the thriving enclave of Presidio—the Renoir Towers.

The self-contained, residential and commercial hub of Presidio, situated inside Lakeshore City Estates in Nuvali, is comprised of 16 towers intertwining its height and size in order to create a community that will suit the needs of Filipino families. This 6.8-hectare enclave of Presidio features an encompassing theme drawn from the timeless neo-Mexican architectural style of San Francisco.

Residence with quaint gardens

The 16-story Renoir garden condominium is already under full-blast construction and is set to be completed by the end of this year. The innovative architecture of Rocio+Cano for the 8-shaped tower, with its unique floor plans and interior settings, is specifically intended to provide maximum natural ventilation and lighting. Among the three-wing towers of Presidio, the Renoir takes pride in having the most units, with a 180° panoramic view of Laguna de Bay.

Renoir has over 320 units with a variety of space configurations such as studio units, one-bedroom homes ranging from 29 to 34 sq.m., and two-bedroom units from 51 to 78 sq.m. More luxurious penthouse units are available at the ninth and tenth floors. It can feature his-and-her bathrooms in the extension of their respective gardens on the roof-ground floor units. More tailor-fitted units may soon experience the customization and practicality of living in Presidio since the recently innovations in action on P1.2, LLC.

The sales office located right inside Lakeshore has been recently opened which showcases a two-bedroom model designed by Trina Jacildo. Elegant yet comfortable interiors are detailed with finely crafted wood finishes to complement the architect's neo-Victorian theme.

Urban lifestyle amenities

Future residents can find balance between work and play with the facilities that will suit their urban lifestyle. A "fitness center" will house conveniences of multi-purpose, bringing classic drapes and restaurants in the backyards of Presidio residents while privacy and security is maintained. Also a Village Center will offer athletic and leisure facilities such as a swimming pool, clubhouse, day-care center, game room, multi-purpose sports center and gym a few steps away from home.

Presidio rises above other conventional condos with the presence of landscaped courtyards, parks and playgrounds, and wide side walks ideal for jogging while breathing fresh breezes from the lake or gazing at the Sierra Madre Mountains. The pool is already under construction and residents can soon enjoy a dip by the first quarter of 2008. One can also relax at The Wharf, Lakeshore City Central's dining commercial complex.

SIMPLY camp outside to enjoy a relaxing afternoon with your family in the all-inclusive lobby landscaped grounds of Presidio.

Strategic location

Previously launched towers at Presidio include Belfast, De Paul, Picasso, Michelangelo, Rembrandt and Monet. The community is near prime educational institutions, medical facilities and lifestyle centers.

The future link to Circumferential Road 6 (C6) will cut travel time to the metro's central business districts by half, while rehabilitation and modernization of the South Metro Rail Transit System will reduce transportation time from Caloocan to Alabang to 30 minutes.

CrownAsia (www.crownasia.com.ph) is a proud affiliate of Pem Land & Lifescapes Inc., the Philippines' largest homebuilder of living homes for all income segments and catering to different lifestyles across the country.

The Manors in the city

IT IS CERTAINLY ONE OF THE MAJOR decisions you will have to make in your life—where to live and raise your family.

Your weekends would be even more pleasant if you could have precious time closer to that long drive to church, and office/mall, to the mall for more bonding time with your family. The good news is there is such a place, and what's more, it is located in the quieter side of the city. The Manors at Celebrity Place is just the address you are looking for.

Conveniently located

The Manors is the only English inspired exclusive residential community that provides quick access to the finest educational institutions as well as centers of commerce and recreation. It is conveniently located in between Boni-ayuig Road and Capitol Hills Drive in Old Balara in Diliman, in the center's former capital, Quezon City.

Diliman is home to some of the country's finest educational institutions such as the Ateneo de Manila University and Miriam College in Katipunan Avenue, and the state university the University of the Philippines. Among the churches located near The Manors are the Chapel of the Holy Sacrifice in UP Nursery, Schools de la Salle in Katipunan Avenue, the Iglesia Ni Cristo Church and the Iglesia ni Cristo in Commonwealth Avenue.

The Manors is also across the country's best hospitals such as the Philippine Heart Center, the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, the Philippine Lung Center, St. Luke's Medical Center, and the Makati Cardiac Medical Center.

Preferred site

Quezon City is now hailed as the country's information technology capital, being the preferred site for call centers as well as BPOs, which have offices in Libis, Cubao and Commonwealth, not far from Diliman. Among the IT companies that have chosen to establish offices here are IBM, eBisnar, Convergys, Teletech, Accenture, Intel and Nylon Asia.

Numerous business establishments, which have their main offices in Quezon City due to its large economic market as well as manpower pool, making it a cost-effective location. Real estate values are very competitive.

The Manors is secure and blissful, the country's premiere business and financial center, are easily accessible through the main thoroughfares of Edsa, the biggest highway in the metropolis, and C5, which connects the eastern parts of the city where The Manors is conveniently located. You elevated light rail transit systems (MRT) and LRT2 also make commuting in and from Quezon City that much easier.

The Manors is also near some of the biggest dining and shopping centers like the new Trinoma Mall, the expanded SM City North Edsa, Robinsons and Ever Commonwealth Mall, the Tomas Morato Grand Mall, Eastwood City in Libis, as well as the new Gateway Mall in the Araneta Center in Cubao.

Mid-rise condos

The Manors is composed of seven mid-rise residential buildings that sit comfortably on 8,903 square meters of prime land. Exactly 338 units measuring from 80 to 120 sq.m. in the seven towers provide more than ample space for growing families.

The mid-rise condos feature single-loaded corridors as well as a common stairway shared only by two units per floor. The units in the Beaux Arts Building, however, have duplex units with balconies, while the residences on the ground floor are enjoy a garden. EMG Homes dedicated 60 percent of the total development to open spaces and lush gardens for the family's enjoyment.

The Manors at Celebrity Place is another prime development of EMG Homes. EMG Homes (www.emghomes.com) is the country's only triple-A builder-developer that provides premium quality urban living, fully serviced communities to young middle-income families.

THE MANORS is located on the quieter side of Quezon City

Landco brings expertise in residential resorts to condo living

LANDCO PACIFIC CORP. PIONEERS YET another luxury-condo concept to ratchet resort lifestyle living, through its first condominium project in Metro Manila, TriBeca Private Residences.

The development, which is set to rise on a 9.7-hectare property off the Novaliches thoroughfare, fuses the features and amenities that have made Landco's previous projects pioneers in their respective niche markets.

"Landco always makes sure that it gives something extra to its developments, something to set them apart from the others. Every Landco development have incorporated new projects, they don't really make the flow. We take pleasure in being copied," says Rueber Lacsamana, TriBeca sales director.

And TriBeca, she adds, will be another first for the company.

"It will be the only condominium that will offer the residential-resort lifestyle that Landco has pioneered and popularized. As a mid-end price, customers will definitely enjoy high-end amenities," Lacsamana says.

"When residents step out of their units, they'd feel like they're in a resort. Indeed, you could call TriBeca a condominium resort as it is infused all the best features of another residential resorts," Lacsamana says.

Seven lush mid-flowering plants and trees take inspiration from Landco's entirely owned Pinedenmas Leisure Farms. Sun-soak pools, geometric floral motifs, manicured gardens and a one-lined singular circular road aptly called the TriBeca Circle, meanwhile, entwined use of leisure farms.

Then there's the 7,800-sq.m Aqua Park which's centerpiece the features of Landco's other pool attractions.

It will have, for example, the Kid's Water Play area, outdoor bar and five courts of Playa Calcoquan; massage centers and a fitness center with state of the art Pontus Pumps's cubicles; a beach pool that simulates the powdery white sands of Peninsula de Punta Pangue; and an impressive infinity pool, a standard feature in all of Landco's residential resorts.

"And like that in Landco's other developments, TriBeca also offers something new for its residents," Lacsamana says, referring to its active spaces.

Those are areas filled with amenities that cater to various fitness and recreational activities, basketball and badminton courts, tasted pavilions and barbecue areas, a playground, a game area with a game chess board and chess pieces, and life-sized chess boards and a function wall for kids and adults, among others.

TRIBECA

Self-contained community

Lacsamana adds that TriBeca will likewise be a self-contained community with products and services made readily available for its residents.

Commercial and service-oriented establishments will be built into the development.

"TriBeca's parking building is also quite unique as it is located away from the residential units. Shuttle services will be available 24 hours a day to help residents go to and from the building to their homes," Lacsamana says.

TriBeca Private Residences is being developed in partnership with AER Holding Land Inc., an affiliate of AER Holding Financial Group, one of the largest nonbank investment houses in the country.

Landco Pacific is a multi-product developer of high-quality residential resorts, leisure farms, residential developments, shopping centers and CBDs in key locations in the country. It continues to provide superior value in its developments, and is widely recognized as a benchmark for innovative and outstanding lifestyle products that revolutionize the way we live.

The luxury of open spaces at Eastwood LeGrand

OVER IN THE EASTERN PART of the metro, there is one residential condominium where the adage that it's not the space, you do get so much more, holds true. It's at Eastwood City's newest gem of a project, Eastwood LeGrand.

Whether you get a spacious 1-bedroom or a luxurious 3-bedroom unit, you get exclusive access to all the amenities of the seventh floor podium deck, the Olympic-size pool and a wading pool meant you and your family. A sun deck, lounge area and the children's playground offer other opportunities to while away the time or create memorable moments. A modern fitness center is also located at the same floor, perfect to shed pounds and tone muscles.

But once you step out of the residential lot Zero zonation that is the Eastwood LeGrand, you realize that your purchase is worth so much more. Walk along the expansive Palm Avenue, with its tall palm trees swaying with the wind, a few steps away from the open park at the entire front, perfect to shed pounds and tone muscles.

But once you step out of the residential lot Zero zonation that is the Eastwood LeGrand, you realize that your purchase is worth so much more. Walk along the expansive Palm Avenue, with its tall palm trees swaying with the wind, a few steps away from the open park at the entire front, perfect to shed pounds and tone muscles.

ONCE NIGHT settles in, the grandeur of Eastwood LeGrand's Art Deco facade becomes more apparent.

Brisk walking experience

The circular road leads you to the Eastwood Central Plaza. During the daytime, its landscaped corridors offer a brisk walking experience with the hills at your back. But once night settles in, the flickering lights through the Central Plaza is a haven for music and dancing. This is the heart of life, and it pulsates very curiously at Eastwood City.

Further down the road, you see something rare, but so open seem, the Central Park's lush valley featuring open spaces that Eastwood City has some or be known for. A lagoon with bridges and a scenic runway that gushes water so tall will further excite Eastwood City residents. Within the landscaped park along the lagoon's shores, new restaurants will whip up soothing dishes that will complement the scenery available.

"The relaxed feel and ambiance at Eastwood City is magnified by the abundance of open spaces and the serenity and safety that go along with the place. This is the lifestyle that many of our residents have experienced already, which residents of Eastwood LeGrand will surely love as well," Eastwood Property Holdings exec. Jim PHP Arbes Matsui. And dedicated.

The Eastwood LeGrand showroom is located at Eastwood City's park Orchard Road.

TOP amenities await residents at Eastwood LeGrand's seventh floor podium deck.

A 24-HOUR elevator ride takes Eastwood LeGrand residents to luxurious shopping for top brands at the building's ground floor level.

Lantana Lane a Mañosa signature property

A PIONEERING CONCEPT IN REAL estate development will soon be launched by Mañosa Properties Inc., a new player in the local property industry.

Lantana Lane, a low density development located on Lantana Street in New Manila, Quezon City, will consist of only 36 exclusive luxury townhouses in a sprawling 1,000-square-meter urban garden setting.

The project is designed by distinguished architect Francisco "Bobby" Mañosa, renowned for such landmarks as The Executive Palace, Pearl Farm Resort, the Edsa Shrine, the New Bicutan City and Shangri-La Mactan.

Jaime Mañosa, chief executive officer and founder of Mañosa Properties, said "We are very excited about Lantana Lane and I am honored that my father has committed his company's design genius to this undertaking."

Masterplan

Lantana Lane's masterplan carries Bobby Mañosa's trademark Philippine design philosophy of "Contemporary Tropical Filipino Architecture." The units are set under exchange and layout with lush settings that natural ventilation and large windows to maximize natural lighting.

The gated property has dedicated open garden areas for the community and a children's playground. The single-lane road is a generous 5-meter wide with 1 meter wide sidewalk strobe on either side as opposed to a typical subdivision development where a narrow lane is given for the community to operate into.

Wide Strobe the two parking spaces each house unit, another two parking slots per house unit, and another six guest parking slots for the community. The property will have 24-hour security. A security guard house is also provided for the entrance gates.

Each unit in the narrow lane has a floor area of almost 400 square meters, consisting of three floors plus a full penthouse, four full bedrooms with walk-in closets, a single-car garage and storage space, rooftop entertainment area with optional jacuzzi and roof garden. The design also includes separate quarters for the maid and driver, each with a toilet and bath.

The units are turned over already fitted and ready for occupancy. Mañosa Properties' presentation materials show the unit as it appears on

LANTANA Lane reflects architect Francisco "Bobby" Mañosa's design philosophy of "Contemporary Tropical Filipino Architecture."

EACH unit in Lantana Lane has a floor area of almost 400 sq m consisting of 3 floors plus a full penthouse.

LANTANA Lane's rooftop entertainment area comes with a roof garden and optional jacuzzi.

sheet and a couple of lots it looks like after some interior decorating has been done.

But like most of Bobby Mañosa's projects, Lantana Lane is a "green development." Each unit comes with a rainwater harvesting facility that can generate about 1,000 gallons for landscape maintenance, vehicle washing and water closet supply. The whole property is designed with cost-saving management strategy to appeal to middle-income buyers by the amenities after completion.

The company also got the services of a long-time master to look over the project from the very start. "This may ring true, but lawyers will only need to get a consultant for their own homes and not worry about the rest of the development," Mañosa says.

Service company

The company's design philosophy aside, Mañosa Properties is not your typical property development group.

"We are actually a service company providing real estate development management services," Mañosa quips. As such, investor or home buyers just like the company to implement the project outright which has proceeded in their behalf.

Shareholders of the company should put on or about 30 percent less down a comparable project as done by a traditional developer. Mañosa Properties only charges a minimum service fee for packaging and project management as compensation.

Units at Lantana Lane come at a direct cost of only P10.5 million for typical homes 120 units and about P15 million for special homes which have an adjacent outdoor garden at ranked to the lot (three units only).

Financial financing scheme

Another unique feature of the project is that buyers can acquire a unit through a financial financing scheme based on the "Built to Own," "Commissioned" or "Shared Development" model. Buyers give their down payment to a trust account in a designated bank, in this case, Security Bank. Then they pay monthly checks of equal payments for the balance.

The bank then releases the funds to Mañosa Properties just to progress every month, following a third party project manager's construction schedule. Buyers are therefore assured that their funds will be used only for the project, as agreed and approved by the Property Development Regulatory Board (Pedro), in clients and the bank. ING also offers home financing for its buyers.

THE MILLENNIUM Dome

The world's biggest dome

By Emman Cora

IF SIMON FILIPINO ARTIST PEDRO TO break ground on his performance by conquering the Big Ecstasy for the domestic Celebrations, the stage is a concert as the Millennium Dome a five-billionaire goal.

The Millennium Dome is an exhibition hall built on the Meridian Line in Greenwich, England to celebrate the start of the new millennium. It opened its doors to the public on Jan. 1, 2000 and ran until Dec. 31, that year. For the record, it is the world's biggest constructed dome in history.

Renamed in 2005 after the mobile phone company O2, the Millennium Dome was then converted into a multifunctional sports and entertainment complex worth £750 million. Within the complex are a number of buildings used for many different events, including concerts. According to plans, the dome will be used in the 2012 Olympics as the venue for gymnastics, basketball and handball finals.

AWESOME STRUCTURES

The dome's structure

Its cover is made of PTFE coated glass fiber estimated to last 25 years. The structure, designed by the Richard Rogers Partnership, is 320 meters in diameter and 50 m high at its center. It is twice the size of the Nepstadion stadium and covers 8 hectares of ground. Floor space. The structure is expected to last until 2018. After that year, developers are allowed to demolish the dome and redevelop the site.

From outside, the dome appears as a large white marquee with 100 m high yellow support towers, one for each month of the year, or each hour of the clock face, representing the role played by Greenwich Mean Time. Inside view it is circular, 365 m in diameter—one meter for each day of the year—with steel tipped edges.

Reference: www.millennium-dome.com, www.greenwich2000.com

TOP amenities await residents at Eastwood LeGrand's seventh floor podium deck.

A 24-HOUR elevator ride takes Eastwood LeGrand residents to luxurious shopping for top brands at the building's ground floor level.

Edsa Grand Residences ideal for OFW investment

THE CONTINUING INFLOW OF REmittances sent by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) back to their families in the Philippines is prompting these migrant workers to seriously consider where they can wisely invest their hard-earned money.

Most consumer investment options available to OFWs include time deposits, government bonds, small-scale businesses, the stock market and real estate.

Cesar Tan, real estate developer and vice president of Edsa Grand Realty, believes that real estate investments are one of the most financially rewarding and high-yielding.

Sound investments

"Earnings channeled to real estate developments—such as condominiums, townhouses, and single-detached homes—are sound investments. This is because the value of real estate consistently rises over time," Tan said.

"This is why I urge many OFWs to place their earnings on real estate and mortgage investments instead of consumer goods or other, more risky investment vehicles. Investments made on condos can generate regular rental income," Tan said.

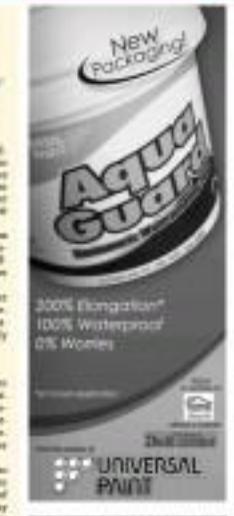
"Every Filipino family dreams of owning a decent home, a place where they can live where they retire. We at Edsa Grand Realty want to help OFWs achieve this dream," said Tan, who manages Edsa Grand Residences, a 39-story condominium located at the corner of Edsa and Greenhills Shoot in Quezon City.

Edsa Grand Residences is conveniently located near Quezon City's bustling businesses district, shopping and commercial areas, hospitals and medical centers, government offices and educational institutions.

Amenities, facilities

When completed in 2010, Edsa Grand Residences will have a grand lobby, retail shops, a swimming pool, a wading pool for children, a fitness center and sauna, a multipurpose hall and function room, among others. The building will be equipped with high-speed elevators, a state-of-the-art security system, water and power facilities and electric generators. Condominium units will each be equipped with phone systems and doorbells (for residential units).

To ensure right security for residents, state-of-the-art closed-circuit television and monitoring systems, fire protection and sprinkler systems, fire detection devices, an automated vehicular traffic system, and other measures will be put in place at the condominium.



Bringing healing back to our planet

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Benzinger Asuncion

A FEW WEEKS AGO I WAS AT the Greenbuild 2007 conference in Chicago, where more than 22,000 delegates—architects, builders, developers, planners and real estate developers and managers—packed registration lines, seminar rooms and exhibition halls, to learn ways to become more energy-efficient and improve the livability of the built environment.

The opening plenary session was keynoted by former US President Bill Clinton. He announced that the foundation he represented, the Clinton Climate Initiative, was launching partnerships in outside buildings with green technologies in an attempt to curb climate change. Its goal was to change the visions of America's structures in an attempt to be carbon neutral by year 2050.

No doubt the task is daunting but the need is equally pressing in the culture of excess that is the United States. There almost everything is supersized or XXL and there are no holds barred in the arena of consumption.

Night lighting

Seeing my evening strolls in Chicago, I noted that despite the city being one of the greenest in the United States, night lighting was used generously. Facades of buildings, structures and environmental art were flooded with light. Lamp posts were abundant and lit from the early evenings to the wee hours of morning.

The venue of the Greenbuild Convention, the McCormick Convention Center, had tall windows and skylit ceilings, that because the overcast sky allowed slightly less than sufficient natural light in, compact fluorescent bulb pledgers were left switched on throughout the day. Had they been shut off, as window would have tolerated the slightly dimmer environs.

These little nuances of excess were subject of discussion between myself and other Asian attendees, mostly Singaporean delegates who shared my astonishment at how much energy this casino unnecessarily consumes.

Practice what it preaches

On the flipside though, we appreciated that the conference organizers made a huge effort to practice what it preaches. Inside the convention hall, garbage segregation and recycling was promoted with the presence of trashcan labeled bins. Handouts were printed on sheets of recycled paper using soy ink. Exhibitors refused to give out brochures, and instead promoted to send information via electronic mail.

This made me reflect on where our Philippine society and design community stand as far as consumption and environmental considerations are concerned. For one, we are a poor nation with a very low per capita income, where the use of a mere air-conditioner is considered a luxury by most families.

A small fraction

In my experience, the budgets for interior fit-out in our country are a small fraction of those in the first world countries. And that is not merely due to labor costs, it is largely due to a difference in quality of both workmanship and materials, and due to the market's ability to spend.

We could not economize more, even if we wanted to, because we would not afford it. We would consume even less, however, if we imposed the way we handle our resources instead of finding their way into recycling plants, they end up in the underutilized in landfills.

This is where we have to innovate to be green. While the bottom line is that we are not really big consumers by global standards, our biggest challenge is to reexamine how we throw, and how we use reuse.

In his speech, Clinton insisted that we should zone shift from merely minimizing harm to the environment, to measuring instead how much more we can do to heal our planet back to health. It is food for thought.

Hopefully we can sufficiently educate ourselves on these issues of consumption and destruction, enlighten our communities with serious and salacious that can shine brighter than any compact fluorescent bulb.

INFORMATION on recycling and proper waste disposal were displayed prominently in the convention hall by the Greenbuild 2007 organizers.

Creating a conducive, healthy workplace

By Teo S. Sanvictores

NEXT TO YOUR HOME, YOU LIKELY have the strongest connection with your workplace, where you can be most productive and creative.

However, much of your energy is also consumed in this personal space, leading sometimes to anxiety, fatigue and depression.

Rozlika Yeh, an internationally certified feng shui consultant, said the workplace is the "biggest moment in people's daily lives" and can be a huge, crucial factor in employee retention.

Best advantage

Given that healthy and competent workforces could be a firm's best advantage, employers should find ways to improve workers' well-being, morale and productivity by improving their workstations as well.

According to Yeh, when space is tight and many employees are working in cubicles, it is more important to maximize space so as to create a conducive and healthy workplace.

When creating that "perfect" workplace, certain factors to keep in mind include basics such as oxygen level and amount of sunlight. Also to be considered are the not so obvious factors including electromagnetic pollution, hidden messages and health threats.

Some tips

Here are some tips to follow in creating healthier, more productive workplaces:

• Allow employees to personalize their workplaces by giving them freedom of expression in their work area—all within reason, of course.

• Use water features, plants and vibrant artwork in the room.

• Install full-spectrum lighting instead of fluorescent lights.

• Avoid sharp angles pointing at people as they create attacking energy. Splay-leafed plants may also oppose sharp and knife-like.

• Be aware of what the subconscious might constitute threatening. For example, floor-to-ceiling windows in a high-rise building might make people feel unprotected or unsupported.

A PERFECT workplace is important to improve one's well-being and productivity.

• Pay attention to your environment's sensory experiences, particularly the smells. Are you welcomed by comforting food smells, such as coffee or the aroma of energizing essential oils? Proper breathing lies at the basis of useful living.

• The subconscious messages your environment is sending are crucial tools in creating efficient workspaces. For example, if your organization has downsized and there are many empty cubicles, the environment is saying, "Business is not good." Whereas, if you took that same space and gave remaining employees double cubicles, the environment would be saying, "Business is so good, sure we can afford some luxuries, like a more spacious workstation."

• The work environment should also support and reflect the hopes, dreams, goals and intentions of the business. If a name and logo of your company should be in a high, well-lit, auspicious place, flaying your company's name or logo on a doormat encourages disrespect and detracts the energy of habitat.

Creating an environment where people are happy to come to work and reluctant to leave should not be hard. Once you start applying feng shui basics to your workspace, you will see how easy it is to transform offices into a high-energy space where people feel safe, secure, valuable and respected.

(Yeh's website is www.fengsuiliving.com)

Toying around

She's a doll

Heart Evangelista may be all grown up now but she allowed herself to be transformed into a life-sized doll for this special Super shoot

BLUE MOOD "I am very relaxed with the job that I have. The difference a lot of people," said Heart.

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by JM Lopez
Art Direction by James Earvin Lopez

"IF YOU MET ME A few years ago, you wouldn't have a second with me. I was so full of myself," said Heart Evangelista, who was sitting in a makeup room in DPI studios. She remembered telling, "I didn't mean to be like that, I was just innocent about a lot of things. I was young and confused. But I've grown up."

Clearly, she has. From the 13-year-old girl who joined show business against her father's wishes, Heart has blossomed into an independent young woman. Gone are the bodyguard, stylist and bouncer who used to shadow her every move; she now lives on her own, "I like going to the grocery. I like the hot, and the Grey Mirepoix. I cook sinangag, monk, now I'm not so grocery anymore. I used to have nothing to share but fashion and laugh, so, that now I have wisdom and it's better than ever."

She dolls up her growth to meeting actor Jennifer Bautista, her best friend of three years now, who she says caught her a lot about life. "We influenced on the work my [unintelligible] now, my being mature."

And although her parents are still coming to terms with her choice to live, she said, "We're rebuilding our relationship. I want them to get to know who I am."

Heart may be all grown up now but she temporarily abandoned adult world to don specially Super shoot, allowing the creative team to transform her into a life-sized doll, inspired by the popular Pinky St. doll from Japan. Go these pages, she models clothes from Pre-Shoppe's Holiday Collection.

How do you feel about being a [illegible] doll for one, it's not a one-year deal, it's a family. Do you like it?

What do you like about the brand? What are your top Pre-shoppe picks?

The makeup is really nice. They have this lipgloss palette. I like that they cater to different people, they consider what one. Or people like to wear and see they make it trendy. They don't stick to one style.

Describe your personal style, off-camera.

I like being simple and classy. I don't dress too much skin. I like shopping. My goal for 2008 is to collect Chanel bags in different colors.

What are you busy with now?

I just shot two commercials. I have a big campaign for 2008.

What do you have ahead for you in show business?

I love the feeling that I am 22 when I started and now that I'm 22. I have achieved a lot. And whatever you decide to do for the rest of your life or not you know that you're contributed something. At the end of the day, what I go to bed [illegible] I can say, I did everything.

What do you love about being in show business?

There's a lot of hate-watching. I used to care about what people said but eventually you realize it's really a part of it. Once you a always gonna be there. But when I really don't like is how it can change you, how it can make your heart a big. You're surrounded by people who adore you but it's not a forever thing, you have to really find yourself and hold on to who you really are because you can get lost.

How do you make sure you stay grounded?

My family and friends, by having people who really know

you, you really have to have your friends and you really have to have your family.

What are your passions?

I suck, I guess. I love ice skating. I'm not so good though. I sing, I have a lot of songs. I'm just a lot into ice skate. Some become stories or for personal. Yeah, I write songs, as well. But my biggest passion is really acting.

You have a big love for animals, eco-style?

Yeah, I have five dogs, not counting the dogs we have with my parents—we have like 14, 12. I'm active with the Philippine Animal Welfare Society.

What's a normal day like for you?

I didn't have normal days before—a normal day would be taking a shower to ABS-CBN and going straight to work. But I have normal days now. I love going to the grocery, I love it. If you want to see me in person, you'll see me in supermarkets. Wholesome there. I wake up, run around. Sidewalk, walk the dog, get my nails done, go to visit Jessica, go to the mall and watch movies. Or watch sizzling circus basics.

What do you love about what you do?

I am very blessed with the job that I have. My influence a lot of people. It's a kind of an opportunity for myself, to a very big level it. Whether you're famous or not, when you speak and people hear it, you're inspiring other people. I know it's a very bizarre answer because it's really true.

How do you relax?

I surf twice a month, I skateboard.

Was skateboard? That's a surprise— people think of you as a girly girl.

I understand, I understand. I'm really master but I'm sporty. I grew up with my dad, tomboyish kind but I also had a Spanish mom who centered me as an up straight so I'm a mixture of both. It's fierce though because when I fall, I really cry.

What are your plans for the future?

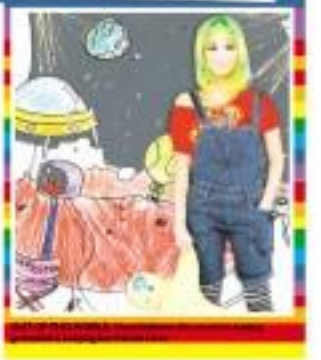
I really wanna have my own business—something ... animal related. My clothes are big, Filipinos are so talented and there are opening for brands. If Rider can reach all the ways to Ghana, maybe I can conquer Asia in some way. Hopefully by some ways I feel like it's time to move on, because there are so many new talent here who deserved to show what they have to offer.

What's your ultimate goal?

My biggest dream is to have my own animal shelters. I wanna have something like that, especially here in the Philippines where meaning only a dog is just... is dog. They don't even have the decency to go down and pick the dog up.

And we always loved dogs?

Yeah, because when I was a kid our street kept dog. Get mean. Sleep, bark. I was very young.



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She's a doll

What toys did you play with growing up?

I loved Barbies. I had a hundred plus Barbies. They were given to Salvation Army. Since my parents were strict, I lived my life with Barbies. Everything I wanted to do was happening with my Barbies. I have a stuffed toy, her name is Pinky, and she's still with me up to now.

What's the weirdest thing a fan has done for you?

They send me Louis Vuitton, they bring me all over New York to shop. It's so weird. We don't really expect that from fans.

What can your fans look forward to?

I'm gonna come out with my own CD. Hopefully I will also release it in Australia. I released a single in Australia before. Two years later the producer was trying to call me and I didn't know that it reached 20th in the top 50 charts in Australia. The Pussycat Dolls and Black Eyed Peas were before me!

What's one thing people should know about you?

I really am nosey but I'm not admitting. It's different now. Before I was.

You think you were?

I was, I was so nosey. I was really nosey. But it was just a phase. I was getting all the attention. I had people looking at me. I was really in demand. I thought you paid your blessed bills or the friends or theatres. I was a brainless thing to me in the making. I didn't know that when you got famous you just flaunt your fame and buy anything with no shopping limit. I was really like that. But it's different now.

Then you were an idiot.

I think I'm still more (laughs).

When did this change, happen?

Three years ago.

Around the time you met Jeanine?

Oh yeah. Back then I didn't know what a manager's check was. I literally wasn't behind my money. Even the bank in that bank because I was afraid if I signed a check my money would disappear. I didn't know how to cross the street. He brought me to Meridien and I was crying in the car because I remembered the Meridien. Like Jeanine used to tell Bob in the market, he used to test all and sees. That's how he started out. He even used picking up garbage in Boston. When I met him, he taught me to do so many things I didn't have you can clean the floor with a cloth and vinegar.

So you think if you didn't meet Jeanine...

I'd still be the same, I'm stranded to some. I always dreamt of that height in this big music who would treasure your best your outfit and it's really what happened. He's like a soldier, a knight, who has been around the world and has experienced so many battles and he rescued me and he brings me around the world and takes me on adventures. It's gonna be always exciting.

super

Kinetically crafted

Super sits down with one of the biggest designer toy makers in the world

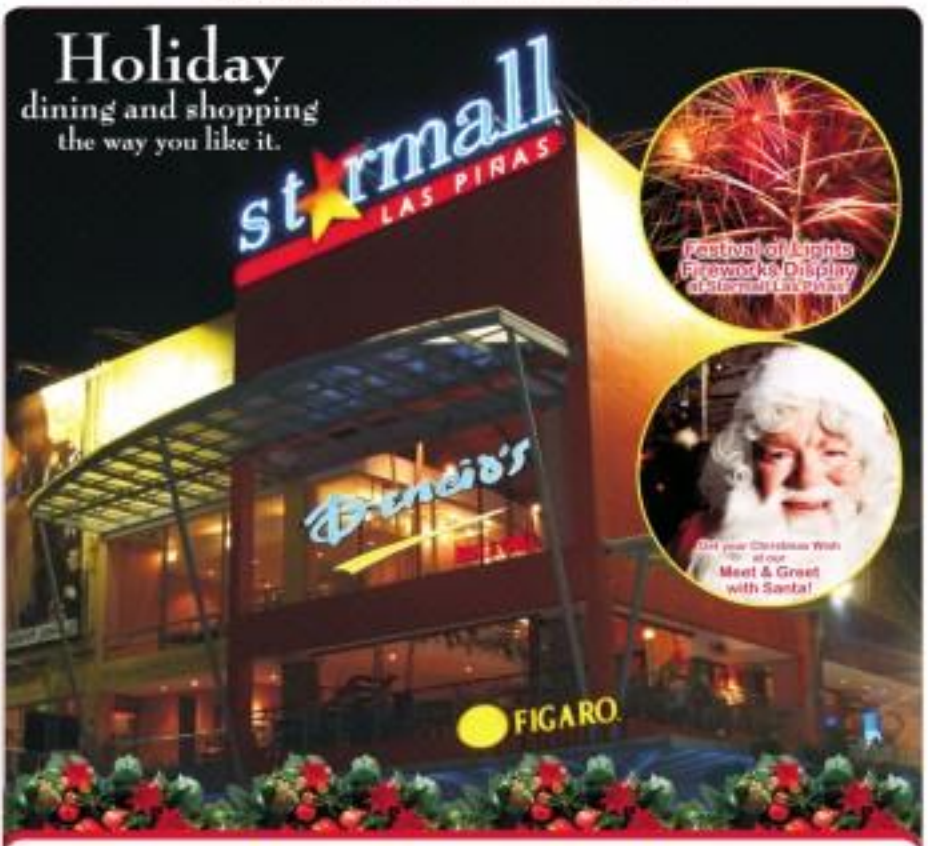
WHEN I STARTED COLLECTING designer toys during my last year in high school, I called it "toster digging," but it was really just a nerdy pursuit to try and figure out identity.

My first encounter with the trend happened in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, where I stood in one of the corners of a brightly lit room emblazoned with metallic blue wallpaper and furniture. School kids were crowding the area, but I wasn't distracted. How could I? There was no way I could have been distracted that time. There I was, marveling at the urban vinyl figures created by Japanese street-soul designer Takashi Murakami.

The urban-designer toy movement was born in the late '90s, when Michael Lau showed up at an exhibition in Hong Kong with a handful of G-Dos that he had customized into hip-hop street fashion figures. The toys have gone a long way since then.

MARTIANAY SO

THE MAN WITH THE AWESOME JOB. This is Raymond Ong



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Dec. 2	Jollibee Kids Christmas Decor Activity
Dec. 8	Stardance The Grand Finale Showdown
Dec. 16-24	Bonbanig Cielo
Dec. 16	Abot Mirchain Dance Explosion
	Meet and Greet Santa
Dec. 22	Meet and Greet Santa
Dec. 23	Destined to be a Star Talent Hechat
Dec. 29	Meet and Greet Santa

Dec. 8	Exhibit of Paint Frames at the Hub
Dec. 9	Final Judging of Paint Entries at 3pm
	Awarding at 6pm (LP Paint Making Contest 2007)
Dec. 13	Perfect Rhythm Christmas Recital
	Meet and Greet Santa
Dec. 16	Grand Christmas Raffle Draw
Dec. 29	Mother Ruiter Guild LP Chapter
	Grand Christmas Raffle Draw

Dec. 2	Jaimee Gamboa Mall Tour
	Star Extreme Hip-Hop Weekly Eliminations
Dec. 6-7	Mga Tribalins 2007
Dec. 9	MDC Holiday Cheers Christmas Show
	Star Extreme Hip-Hop Weekly Eliminations
Dec. 14	SMB Event "Pasiking Sandaang Walang Kaloob"
	Forest Job Fair
Dec. 16	Meet and Greet Santa with Las Piñas Boys Choir
	Grand Finale: Star Extreme Hip-Hop
Dec. 23	Meet and Greet Santa with Hiring Workshops Choir
	Grand Christmas Raffle Draw
	Grand Finale: Little Pop Star Contest
Dec. 30	Grand New Year Raffle Draw
	Cebu and Color Magic Comedy Show

MORE THAN JUST A GAME. In Sotheby's, ToyCity.

ARMY OF QEE. 1,000 distinct Qee designs

Kinetically crafted

From page B1

People who have dived into the crazy pool are usually either designers specializing in self-described fourteen set in action classically trained to design utensils. The toymakers produce in limited editions, as few as five pieces and as many as a thousand. Because of their originality and rarity, they've become highly sought-after by collectors, who are mostly adults.

Graffiti artists, DJs, and musicians from cities across Europe, South America and Asia have designed most of the vinyl toys produced in the last decade.

Qee's a magnet

Two years ago, it discovered a series of designer toys called Qee, pronounced "key." Produced in Hong Kong by Bounty company ToyCity, Qee figures have a standard body type, but with head sculpts that may be of a dog (Doggy Q), a cat (MeCatQ), a rabbit (Bunny), a monster (MonQ), or a bear (BearBrickQ).

These mini-figures stand 2.5 inch tall and combine multiple concepts into a toy is irresistible package. Designed by cutting edge artists from across Asia, America and Europe, Qee figure series come accented to "Mod" Sonic so that their identities are concealed, believe it or not, there is even an 8-inch DIY (Do It Yourself) Qee program for aspiring designers with a blocking gallery show.

A variety of international artists and designers have been involved in the creation of Qee figures since they first hit the market in 2003. Many distinctive styles have also been developed in conjunction with well-known household brands, including Adidas, Swatch, H&M, Bird Simpson, Jane Carmichael and Blu Tremain. Today there have been more than a thousand Qee designs that have been released.

Since purchasing my first Qee figure, a Kaneko Bear Qee created by Japanese character designer Touma, I have considered ToyCity to be top-rated toymaker in the planet.

Catch the craze

Founded by toy aficionados Raymond Choy in 1999, ToyCity initials stands for "Toy to Raymond." It is among the first companies to capture the potential of the designer toy. It was rewarded out of an obsession for tall toys, and has been stretching the boundaries between product design, art, and graphics for years.

Raymond Hanes, "I set up the toy store in Mongkok. I wanted this toy business primarily because I am a toy collector—because I had collected too many toys and needed to sell some. I had a lot of Japanese figures, which were extremely popular in Hong Kong, so I wanted by selling my action, do see were the only store which had so many rare collectibles, we attracted the attention of other toy companies who wanted us to carry their items. From then on, I would shuttle to Japan once a month to look for new stocks. Getting to travel regularly because of my work was amazing!"

For Raymond, inspiration comes from looking closer at the small details of everyday living. "I believe design is everywhere. We are living with it. Each day, I wanted to open mind for ideas. I read the newspaper and magazines, and I watch the TV. The brain has to be working all day long. Ones an idea comes, I must with my design team so we can translate the vision into a project."

Inspired by fits of curiosity and charged by suggestions of present-day commentary and popular opinion, ToyCity's founder and president has learned a lot about the business.

"I collect action figures of all kinds. I must show inside a warehouse that's 2,000 square feet big. My collection's still getting bigger, although I'm very selective (now to collect only a few)," Raymond says.

When I asked him which toy he would pick if he could only keep a handful, he told me, "It's very hard because I love all my toys. But if I had to choose, it would be the Toyzu, which is my first toy (the Adidas Qee bear) because it has the design, and the Qee drawing of my 4-year-old son. It's not a good drawing of a Qee, but it's my son's work. When he grows up and sees it, he'll probably be very happy."

Blood, sweat, and toys

"Since I've been collecting so many kinds of toys for years, I've learned to pay attention to every quality," he explains. "I select the designs and the designers based on the quality of the project and the idea. My primary intent who have taken, but don't just focus on one to foster designers. We always keep an open mind for new blood. And of course, I make sure that we take care of the

WILLY WONKAHEAD THE TOY FACTORY. It's about the little details

PLAYGROUND FEATURES. ToyZilla's (pictured) all-in-one-body is a theme park

collection of ToyZilla—the fans who continue to buy the high-quality designer toys that we produce."

The hard work has paid off. Aside from incredible sales figures, ToyZilla has received many awards, including the first Block Toys Award for five consecutive years, as well as the Third Innovation Company Award and Three Toygodd Crystal awards from the action Figure Times, the largest toy website on the Internet.

Just a few days ago, ToyZilla was honored with the Capitol Leaders of Excellence Award. "The award appropriately reflects the endless hours we spent by designers toys, instilling contemporary designs of toys for the Art Vinyl Toy market," Raymond says.

Yet after all these feats, Raymond feels like he's just warming up.

"It is hard to make new toys but I'll continue, I'd love to continue."

ToyZilla continues to grow, working with many renowned and up-and-coming artists. The company is expanding the definition of art, finding its creations in stores and more concept stores, galleries, and museums worldwide. Today, Raymond's creations are sold in 19 countries, including Russia, South Africa, and the Philippines.

To paraphrase a modern master: All you really need to know, you learn with your ToyZilla toys taught me that 'I can do anything, as long as I do it right.

It's something you take to the heart.

IMPOSSIBLE IS NOTHING. Bruce Adidas is a ToyZilla fan

Gizmo at your doorstep

MOBLOCKS

By James Gabylle

Team Moblocks is out to prove that a great idea will certainly go places

HOW CAN WE MAKE SOUND SHAPES—tables physically touchable and breakable? How do we bring software interfaces out of the screens and into the living room? The Moblocks team has the answers.

A start-up company on tangible systems and creative electronics—that is what they're about.

The Moblocks team is a collaboration of guys from the Maya Preschool and from the Interaction Institute, Robotics, and Control Laboratory in the Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Interested in alternative learning tool like interactive pictures, Moblocks brings up innovative sensory interfaces into the limelight.

The group's pioneer product allows kids to seamlessly draw a cow onto a play area by using wooden blocks on a tray. It has been tested by a bunch of eager kids during the Shangri-La Mabolbolesia event held last August.

The Moblocks guys are looking for partners in fusing creativity with electronics, and teaming up with inexpensively fun products. For more information, contact Gabyle Bay at sabylebay@gmail.com.

MOBLOCKS PARTY

The pre-school authority

Of course, the co-founders of the Maya Preschool used a preliminary set of prototype to fully test, [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

24/7 SUPER RADAR

by Janine Cuenca Dorio and Bret Jues

Rico the throbbing debut beat of the season in Christmas Technoball tonight at Warehouse 135 (Yakal Street, Makati City, T 897-0535). Usher in the first day of December with this underbelted "dead kisses" and "funky techy" house of **DJ Steve Bamford**. Php 300 regular door charge comes with a free drink.

Jed Madela first major performance with their new lineup on Dec. 6 and rare just how excited we are excited. Alyson Fernandez, can't-miss name in front of a huge audience while performing back-to-back with **Kyla** and **Gerald Santos**. Also in the concert is special guest, American actor and standup comedian Jamie Kennedy. We're curious to discover how these partners will all come together in that one show. This is slated at 7 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum. Call 911-3333.

DMCI the mouthwatering aroma-of-good-times as all your favorite restaurants at the Fort Strip, Bonifacio High Street and Serendra get together for a good cause under one roof in the **RBC Test...Fort Bonifacio**. In the **Tastes of Tomorrow**, P Da Bes. 6...7 p.m. you can eat to your heart's content for only P1,000. You can forget calorie counting for one night without guilt, as your contribution will benefit Light Tomorrow Foundation, a housing project of Mayor and Ms. Imelda Papin.

RBC the Resort at executive lives all over the world to **Spicy Fingers** Jon and Restaurant Staff. SR Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati, T 729-8181, a branch of the Hong Kong fast of Sin-some tastes. To give Manilans a sample of the favorites at the first branch, Spicy Fingers have brought in from the former British Colony Crispy White Bait as part of their menu as well as very good spiced lunch to entertain the diners.

Schedules are subject to change without prior notice. For more information on events, log on to www.mug24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at your favorite malls, bars and restaurants. You can also text 24/7 gigs to 2801 for Globe and Sun and 2801 for Smart. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mug24-7.com & mug24_7@yahoo.com for inclusion in this column.

Doing the entire family to celebrate the holidays with a bit of culture and a sense of wonder, **RBC** the Eight Ivy Ingoing of ballet shows across the stage of the CCP Main Theater when Ballet Philippines presents **Snow White** starting Dec. 5-16. Call 551-8221, 551-7003 or 832-6011 or email ballet@philippineballet.net

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Space Invaders

Theodore's World of Wonder

The newest store on the Bonifacio block will have shopaholics jump for joy

By Joann R. Manahan
Photos by Paulo Pineda

SO MANY CHILDREN'S stories are written about magical lands where the imagination, camot to Mo. Rabes in Sesame, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, The Wizard of Oz all transport kids and adults alike to a far away escape from reality. In today's fast-paced world, people are in need of a sanctuary and unfortunately a land full of candy and rivers full of chocolate are against most people's diets. So bites and spas always attempt to provide an escape from the hustle and bustle of life, the only problem is that it's only the second you walk out the door.

A world of retail

I have found my new sanctuary at the top of Bonifacio High Street. Sitting in a car to be the coveted end of this newest place to avail at Theodore's. A black brick wall façade distinguishes it from the hyper active "car trend chicks" that clutter the high street. This is the first concept store in Manila, reminiscent of Colette in Paris and in the near future that has been given life by retailer Pam Gonzales. The entire concept of the store was dreamed up by Pam and was influenced by her stay in New York and is a reflection of the hits and pieces of the world that she has picked up. With the help of interior Mel Le'O, Pam created a space where dark meet chic senses out of every corners.

The industrial look of the store is enhanced by the stars filled with over 76 different brands of clothes. While the interior emulates an urban vibe, the detail of a grassy house the accessory station you feel light and airy. The concept goes beyond the concept of the five door to lock at the merchandise with no pressure. Unlike other boutiques where the staff is either a bit snobby or very eager staff look over your shoulder or try to suggest what you should try on ("ma'am try nyo 'to wag ka sorry eto extremely well-trained staff at Theodore's smile politely and magically appear to assist you at just the right moment. After spending hours at the store, I feel like I had made several friends out of the shop assistants. To soften the look, Pam added large colorful ottomans for lounging, fabrics and other finishes to all comfortably and neat. The staff also offers them sofas, tea

A COZY spot in the store

or a signature Theodore's mineral water and magazines as they patiently wait.

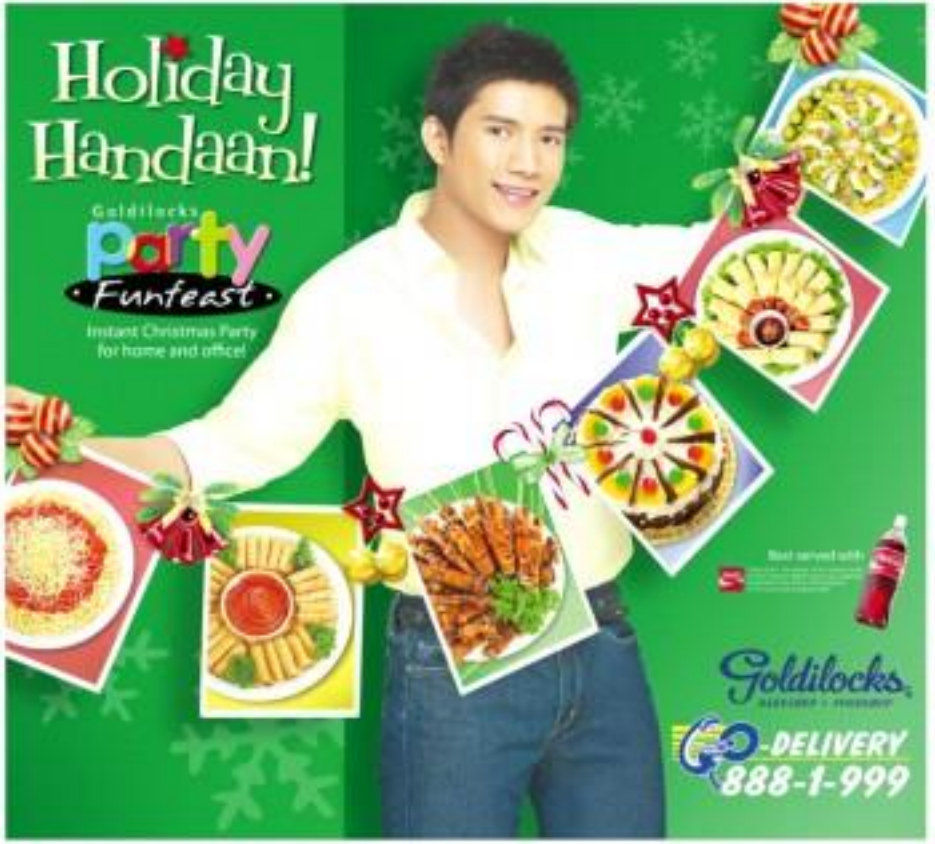
Experience Theodore's

Pam has carefully planned out the store to give patrons a total experience when they come in shop. The clothing at the front of the store is a bit more edgy and serious, while the shelves toward the back are more focused laid back. It is also in the back area that Pam has created an interactive area where selected men and creative customers can express themselves on a wall that she has dedicated solely for people to paint on. While most dressing rooms tend to be cramped, Ill be said with a really temporary one, dressing rooms at Theodore's are spacious and comfortable enough for you to play fashion show without having to leave the room.

One of a kind

Discerning shoppers will be in paradise as the fashion mélange Pam's impeccable style. Add to that, most clothes have very few items in different sizes, meaning that you won't ever have to run into anyone in the same outfit. A big appeal of Theodore's is that Pam carries exciting new brands from overseas, perfect for younger fashion lovers. Moreover, Theodore's has an exquisite selection for men, something hard to find in Manila. The store works clothing that suits any type of guy—from a Hip Trip Love, or more conservative classic T-shirt and polo types to the flamboyant silver sequin. The store is also fashion forward by remembering men, so footwear brands Delman's and Superga back into the Philippine retail scene. There is something for everyone at Theodore's with the price ranging from little trinkets, books lamps, cameras and cd's, to one of a kind sunglasses and accessories, to the highest end jackets made from vintage Chanel silk. Hours can be spent exploring the stores different layers.

After strolling the entire length of the beautiful high street, filled with the commercial owners and everyday grind, it's nice to feel that one can escape the stress of the real world and revel in the world of Theodore's.



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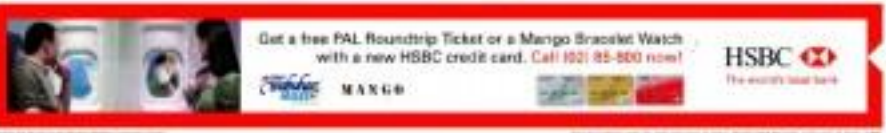

The Artist Formerly Known as Print

"Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."
—Groucho Marx

I KNEW I HAD STUMBLED UPon the secret language of uncrossed bookleaves when I read an affectionate scribble on the first page of a crumbling paperback. "These idiots are gifts," it read. "May you enjoy every single word of this book as much as I did." (Mental Post-it note: return book to owner.)

It was as if I had cracked open a portal back in time and lost a treasure trove under the tsunami of fast and cheap of handwriting. The book was not mine, yet I became a part of that book's life cycle, and involved in the exchange of sentiment between friends who would find a deeper understanding, woody bibliophiles can, in the spaces between lines and words, and for generations to come.

So when I recently saw the breaking news on Amazon.com about "the future of reading" as promised by a digital device, I could not help but wonder if we are once again on the verge of forgetting such fragile things, like handwritten letters that were exercised in obsolescence since the electronic coup.

The device is called the Amazon Kindle, a wireless, portable reading machine that gives the user access to more than 90,000 books. It's more than just an e-book, it also gives a daily fix of one's favorite blogs, newspapers and magazines. The secret is in the screen—Kindle's display is constructed out of a kind of electronic ink that mimics the qualities of print, making the text so sharp and clear, Amazon promises that the reader would forget it was something other than print.

Wireless Wonder

The Kindle's positive attributes seem straight. It's wireless, needs no syncing with a laptop, and unlike iPods, it uses the same high-speed data network as advanced cell phones—so you don't even need to look for a hotspot.

"Whether you're in the bed or the tub," as the classy product description commercial, "Kindle lets you think of a book and get it in less than a minute." If you buy a book from the online Kindle store, it is "wirelessly delivered seamlessly in less than one minute." And with more than 90,000 books available, including 110 of the New York Times bestsellers, its practicality is unarguable, thereby making it a less worthy object for technophiles everywhere.

Before one could even formulate a complete mental argument, Amazon had fired

TURN TO PAGE E2

COLOR THEORY. Lego elements in full color.

DESIGN DUTY. A designer at work in Denmark.

Lego of me

Toy giant Lego turned 75 this year, but the creator of the iconic connecting brick isn't ready for retirement

LOST IN TRANSIT

Paolo R. Reyes

IN THE RUNK OF AN eye, they've became the Senior Citizen Card-carrying members of Toyland.

Nothing 10k, platinum blonde babe barbie is now a middle-aged beauty queen, unhappily married to her work-ally archfoe-now-boss Ken. At 45, deceased Star soldier G.I. Joe is now a wheelchair-bound war veteran, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

But even after blowing out 75 candles during its birthday bash in Billund, Denmark last August, Sunday toymaker Lego—which built its empire on primary-colored connecting bricks—has managed to bridge the generation gap, minus the plastic surgery.

Ironically, story of Lego began with a wooden toy. It was 1932, and the world was in the grips of an economic depression. A Danish carpenter named Ole Kirk Christiansen found himself in dire financial straits. Without any license to build, he decided to make wooden toys. Two years later, his fledgling enterprise became a flourishing business. He named the company Lego, an abbreviation of the Danish words "leg godt," meaning "play well."

Perhaps in a foreshadowing of the future, Christiansen was quite unaware that, in Latin, the word actually means "I put together."

GREAT DANES. Three generations of Christiansens, the founder's at right.

915,103,765 possibilities

Now a generation and some 150 billion plastic bricks later, Lego is the fifth largest toy manufacturer in the world. The founder's grandson, Kjeld Kirk Christiansen, is the 20th richest person in the planet, worth a cause 22.3 billion according to Forbes.

At the start of the 21st century, the humble Lego brick was named the "Toy of the Century"—twice. Hird by the trend-setting folks at Fortune magazine, and later by the British Association of Toy Retailers, where it beat out longtime sentimentals Teddy Bear and Barbie.

Launched in 1958, the interlocking Lego brick was part of the company's revolutionary "System of Play" concept, which emphasized the importance of learning through play. Considering that it bear the key. The bricks produced today can interlock with those produced back in the 1950s. They can be combined to create anything from a 21-piece Bionicle action figure to the 3,449-piece Death Star straight out of "Star Wars."

There are, in fact, 915,103,765 possible ways to arrange six eight-stud Lego bricks of the same color. If it was originally 102,981,500, but a computer-savvy mathematics professor calculated that the figure was too low, and quickly corrected the discrepancy. Laid end to end, the number of bricks sold in a year would reach more than five times around the world.

Trouble in Toyland

But it wasn't always milk and cookies in Toyland.

Three years ago, the bricks didn't seem to stick up anymore. Lego announced the biggest loss in its history. The company netted its CEO, Kjeld Kirkprad, unceremonious perks in California and the UK were sold, hundreds of workers were laid off, and sales stagnated.

Those dark days raised a perennially evaded question: Could an archetypically traditional toy survive a hot-driven market that was moving faster than ever?

Lego became very dependent on its blockbuster licenses with "Harry Potter" and "Star Wars," and last eight of Lego's original target group: small children.

But after astonishing their naysayers the company began to pick up the pieces after the unexpected crash. Their back-to-basics strategy revived classic concepts and gave them a new twist. Electronic-enhanced robot brands like Lego Technic and Mindstorms were given more prominence, and their phenomenal Duplo line for toddlers was eventually relaunched.

All work, all play

These days, Lego is back on track, and legendary tales of the good ol' days. Although the company headquarters are still in based in Billund, they now have so-called "listening posts" in Munich, Barcelona, LA, and Tokyo in order to monitor the latest trends. And as the years go by, there seem to be more and more grown-ups who are 120 designers representing 25 different nationalities, some of whom have trained in design or art schools around world.

The signs are promising. Last year, Time 'N' Co. super bolted Lego as their "Product of the Year." while their Architecture Master Builder search for encouraged adult hopefuls in the US to rediscover their childhood passions by raking 10 pounds of bricks, creating a spur-of-the-moment sculpture, and literally assembling their dream job in a full-time position at Legoland in Carlsbad, California.

For many of those diehard AFOLs (Adult Fans of Lego), nobbling together 4,000 plastic bricks and snapping them into something spectacular isn't just child's play. Lego building, at least for those self-described "Master Builders," is both an art and a science, an artistic pursuit that clicks well with their creative side.

Hatched over a period of multicolored bricks, their hands are always in a basket of red rectangles and primary-yellow cubes, they look like true-eyed children engrossed in a great summer project.

Maybe that's the most endearing lure of Lego. Child's play is an ever-fickle world, and consumer electronics will always promise the latest, coolest fun of traditional toys. But the art of creation, in itself, will never fall out of fashion. Even for the geeks who never grew up.

RETRO SPACE. The blueprint of the original brick in 1958.

PLAY WELL. In Latin, "lego" means "I put together."

STACKED UP. Storage facilities in Billund.

ROBO TECH. Toying around with the Mindstorms.

FUN FACTORY. An assembly line of Lego minifigures.

Habagat Carrera 2007

Text and photos by Jordy Makabe

I HAD NO IDEA WHAT I WAS GETting myself into when I got an invite. Besides go down to Siargao to savor an adventure race. Being the easy going, happy-go-lucky guy that I am, I figured I'd find out soon enough.

What can go wrong spending two days on a small tropical island with beautiful beaches, right? The moment I did find out what I was getting into was when I noticed that the 10 people I shared a room with in Siargao City all had showing my nuts. Gladiators, into cross country folk and all the kind of stuff you usually don't associate with an easy weekend at the beach in a cozy hotel. I had some of those things. Somebody had finally explained the whole thing to me when I didn't make me feel any better.

"You mean, those guys can, like, swim, kayak, climb and bike non-stop for 300 kilometers through jungles, hills and from island to island over-packed with gear, nonstop, without sleeping?" The image of me sitting on the beach, in one arm with a cold beer in my hand slowly dissolved in front of my eyes like a three

cornered trick. Once the 14 teams composed of four names each crossed-over at the start line in Siargao City the sealed shoots and disabled had slowly transformed into curiosity. We were herded into an old open-air auditorium and to the sound of the starting shot echoing the sigh the streets of Siargao were chased down pro-cee-dure bikes like the herdsmen on an old endurance that we were. Soon we left them behind and, avoid in a pair where we were supposed to

BHOLE blog dare

The Artist Formerly Known as Print

From page E1

up a few good testimonials, from bestselling authors nonetheless like James Patterson, Michael Lewis and Neil Gaiman, who had given their electronic ink-enhanced thumbs up, extolling the Kindle's wireless, paper-like and portable virtues. Neil Gaiman in fact, during his recent visit to Manila a few days ago, was asked about his thoughts on the Kindle, and he replied that though it would never replace books, it was still the perfect reading companion while traveling.

Thanks to early adopters, the Kindle had sold out in five and a half hours. Soon one for lover everywhere.

Page Against The Machine

So, who out there is a big spoiler about the supposed breakthrough in the world of reading? The Kindle's info to the market has already spurred a flurry of discussions and debates on the WWW. Purists or defenders of the page first find the Kindle would do to the book industry what the iPod did to its next door neighbor, the music industry. Will the event really lead to a literary Napster of sorts?

As a bookworm, of course I have my views about this overhyped object, perhaps in the same way that vinyl record collectors initially felt about compact disc players and iPods. For I find it unimaginable that any digital reading device could ever replace a real book. And yes, it has everything to do with the romance of it all, the kind of connection romance

For because all my life...the cover artwork, the feel of the paper, the dog-eared pages, the highlights and underlines and the scribbles on the sides. It has everything to do with the experience of walking into a section of library, turned through the years with the memories of the people/ events happening in my own life, while going through someone else's life-time in "Love in the Time of Cholera." Where is the art in reviews to bring to "huddled in bed on a rainy night with a good reading machine"? It is that kind of sentimentality of bibliophiles that safeguards the sanctity of books.

But how long would this last? The sentimentality of the reader is formed because of enduring memories attached the reading experience. It is the same brand of sentimentality that aged malleable are affected with, as they hold on to their typewriters even if there's no Spellcheck.

What is that sentimentality to the new generation, the tech savvy bucket that is more familiar with Wikipedia than Britannica? Will it would take would be a big, long-term marketing campaign, in the name of saving the rainforests for example, to create mass desire for a pocket-e-Kindle. Who predicted that the iPod would transform the way we listen to music today? And that happened in less than five years.

Then again, I'm no seer, just a bibliophile with a good memory. We in these changing times, we humans aren't the only ones with powerful memories.

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Indie film makes it big

JADE Castro, Jason Abalos, Paul Jake, Isa Feleo and Raymond Lee

THEIR FILM MAY HAVE little to a documentary from China but the applause in the screen and audiences sent to tears in each of "Endo's" three screenings were enough to make the guys from 180 Pictures happy. Producer Raymond Lee, director Jade Castro, and "Endo's" lead stars Jason Abalos and Isa Feleo were in Nuance, France just this week for the 29th Festival des 3 Continents. It is a festival of innovative works from Africa, Latin America and Asia, and "Endo" is one of the 15 films invited to compete in the fiction and documentary category.

"The audience at each of the three screenings loved it," reports Raymund from Nantes. "At sanyak sila! Many tumors and tugs emphasizing suggestive humor screaming, liberating laughs just subduing. Some because very like! There was an old Swiss grade

JASON Abalos, Isa Feleo and Jade Castro

man, his name is Paul Julmer—and he's been going to the festival since Leo Brouk's days—solo ops, at each festival he has what he calls his 'soup diet' meal, his personal favorite, and this year's is 'Endo.'"

"'Endo' is a love story set in the call center industry and tackles about issues like call fleeting relationships. It is produced by ako Pictures, the same group behind the first Joel Mondlane indie, 'Ang Pagkadalaga ni Maxima Oliveros.'" Since Mant success fully toured the international festival circuit, harvesting many awards along the way, "Endo" is expected to follow its footsteps. This is "Endo's" first competition since winning this year's Spo-

rad Jazz Pilot, Bert Tallitap and Shot actress Isaac as the Cinemalaya Film Festival. Raymund Lee, the film's producer, is no stranger to film the director Jade who also wrote the film, and the two stars, Jason Abalos and Isa Feleo. There were three screenings of the film. The first screening was sold out, even if it was at 10 a.m. on a Monday. Jason and the received applause from the audience when they came out to the street after the screening.

"Endo," short for "end-of-conline I," is the story of young freshwomer Leo (Jason Abalos) forced to take care of his wedding father and happy-go-lucky brother by jumping from one setup job on the next. His "temporary" life is shaken when he meets and falls in love with a driven young woman (Isa Feleo) whose ambition goes beyond getting the next paycheck and is less committed relationship.

The festival program has this short write-up about "Endo" which perhaps explains the reason why they invited the film. "Endo" links the question of love to that of work with apparent candour. The Most enough lives in the relation to confess to call ground, something through repetitions, a power of fascination encourages the loved women to fulfill herself completely. Through the magic of the screenplay the film reasons its characters and controls situations in song and dance. And shows the love of life at work."

"Endo" will have its commercial run in theaters January 2008.

super

Tiny tunes, big band

A 62-member musically strong group gives new meaning to the famous movie line ... 'and this one time, in band camp ...'

By Katrina R. Hultgren
Photos by Ivo Gumba

AS THE CHRISTMAS SEASON draws near, ask any kid what they want for Christmas and you will probably get a bright eyed answer of the newest, hottest (and probably even earliest) toy on the shelves that year. Most people comment that to keep the kids entertained, their playthings have to become so sophisticated that some of their parents can't even figure out. But like any kid, even sophisticated model XYZ will also become outdated and perhaps thrown into a shelf only to reappear during a garage or cleaning out sale.

The holiday season takes a look at a different branch of kids who do something different during their playtime, instead of toys or a Wii, they play with instruments, musical instruments. The Philippine Youth Symphonic Band (PYSB) was formally launched in 1979 and was founded by Dr. Rufino Arbasetas. Dr. Arbasetas who was a doctor by profession was so passionate about music that he made sure all 11 of his kids learned how to play an instrument. (But more remarkable because in the Arbasetas family Basil). Most of his supporters were his patients in his dental clinic.

In tune with the times.

The band's current band manager, Ms. Amabelle Custodio, referred to informally as "Boardie" was entrusted to take manager for the summer music camps of the PYSB. The summer music camps, re-printed Bembe, has about 125 participants each year and was created after 16 years of existence in 2009. There 120 specially chosen young musicians, with ages ranging from 10 to 22 years from various regions of the country underwent a month long intensive training with 25 prolific clinicians and instructors from prestigious institutions like UST Conservatory, UP College of Music, Asian Institute for Liturgical Music, UCA Orchestra, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, Manila Philharmonic Orchestra and Manila Philharmonic Orchestra.

Out of these 120 participants, 62 of its best musicians who have excelled in their musical proficiency were initially selected to form the core group of the band. Each year, currently, about 20 members are promoted to replace those who have graduated from the band. "The members of the

TURN TO

Stephen Zenaida Abbie Joshua Caleb

Where to Stop Where to Go

A handy directory of the country's best establishments

Goodie house classics and other Holiday surprises at The Heritage Hotel

As the Holiday rush nears, avoid your last day gift-giving anxieties by heading down to The Heritage Hotel Manila to just around the corner, a phone call away and even just a click away to provide you with a one-stop luxury shop for sharing good tidings with ease and splendor.

Start visiting all gifts for loved ones who love palate pleasers with a Gourmet Home Goodies Basket. Choose from Cake, Cheesecake dessert choices, pasta, cookies and other Goodie House Classics available at Swiss's with its Holiday Corsage, Floral Lobby.

Then why not make this season more memorable with an intimate yuletide lunch or dinner with family and friends at the Riviera Café's buffet-themed Holiday Lunch, Jan. 6, 2008, Feast of the Three Kings. Publik gastronomic merriment as you indulge in the mulled roast turkey served with cranberry sauce, honey glazed ham and roast rib eye with red wine sauce, amongst a myriad of sumptuous delights, and to sweet temptations with a cornucopia of Swiss's favorite sweets.

Last and most important on your holiday list is the quintessential reserved for your godchildren, when all Holidays are especially meant for them. Take them on a Holiday Party during lunch (11.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.) on Dec. 9 and 16 where they could have the ultimate in fun as they listen to Tito the Bermuda, Jinelle personality and children's book author together with the Heritage Hotel's very own versatile Aunt Tetta entertaining magical creatures in a story telling just for kids.

The little ones can also avail of their favorite book of Tita tita and get a personalized dedication in the book signing per tito. Moreover, your little bundles of joy could giggle and wiggle in their newly acquired love partaking of a well loved cartoon character in animal, play games aplenty and win loads of goodies for only P1,000.00 for adult and P600.00* for kids 12 years old and below.

Don't miss Swiss's Café's sinfully indulgent for your stress free holiday gift-giving that tender the heart of all your practical-minded dear. For inquiries and dining reservations, call The Heritage Hotel Manila at 814-8888 or e-mail feathers@theheritagehotelmanila.com. The Heritage Hotel Manila is managed by the billionaires' hotels and lifestyle.

Starbucks passes the cheer to the Filipino children

This season, join us in sharing holiday cheer with Filipino children through the Starbucks Book Drive. These books can go a long way in proving reasons visible in their faces, a wonder glow to their eyes and a larger motivation to open themselves to a world of discovering and learning.

In celebration of 10 years in the Philippines, Starbucks aims to raise 10,000 children's books in Starbucks January opening young Filipino children. The Starbucks book drive has been a core Christmas activity at Starbucks since 2006.

"We've always been commitment about the book drive, but this year is a monumentary as we aim for 10,000 books for children. All Starbucks partners (employees) are very excited to contribute to the drive and we'd also like to encourage everyone to join us in this initiative, says Eing Somabilla, Starbucks marketing manager.

These books will go to the children of Bacnay and Amadeo in Cavite, Pediatric Unit of the Philippine General Hospital and Philippine Orthopedic Center in PGH, Sacobia in Pampanga, Bit in Samar and some parts of Bongao-peninsular through the assistance of KIDS Foundation as one of our partners this year. These books, either used or unused, can be placed in "book drive boxes" found in all Starbucks stores across the country.

Mey Lin Jupiter delivers

Mey Lin's Fei & Jinnelle Hence branch at Jupiter Street delivers traditional hand-pulled noodles and other authentic Chinese dishes right at your doorstep or in your workplace within the Makati area.

Beat the traffic outside of your hectic work schedule without leaving the office. A scrumptious lunch or dinner a simply just a phone call away. Call 899-6688 or 899-8999, order your favorites and prices soon but not-to-miss Mey Lin dishes will be there in your place with the delicacies and piping hot Chinese fare of your choice.

Enjoy scrumptiously filling Home Box meals consisting of one or two main courses, a reasonable dish and rice for as low as P150+ and P200+ per box (Min. 3 orders per blend).

Savor your favorites Chinese specialties cooked home-style such as the all-time favorite Buta Tim w/ Guapao, well-liked seafood specials like the Squid with Special Sauce, Steamed Fish Fillet or Crispy Salted Shrimps. With more than a hundred items of noodles, dimsum, meat, seafood, veg-ables, appetizers and rice toppings, you will never run out of choices for lunch or dinner.

Mey Lin Jupiter Delivery Service is available seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. with a minimum delivery purchase of P500. Mey Lin's Jupiter Makati City only. Or you may call 899-6688 and 899-8999 for take-out orders for pick-up at the branch located at the ground floor of Jupiter Place Building, 134 Jupiter Street, Bel-Air, Makati City. Also visit the other Mey Lin branches at SM Megamall Level 4 Building A, SM Aseanda Basement Level, SM Mall of Asia North Parking Building beside Hypermart and at Mey Lin Adriatico at 1717 Adriatico Street, Malate, Manila.

Home at Hyatt Hotel for the Holidays

There's no need to flyover for or drive too long to enjoy a relaxing Christmas getaway. Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila offers a variety of recreational and leisure activities, including the largest casino gaming facility in town, relaxing and rejuvenating Spa treatments, and a lit-up ice cream decorating a 33 meter pool, a children's pool and an enclosed whirlpool.

For this holiday season, make your reservation special by booking one day of Hyatt's elegantly designed guest rooms or suites for two nights and more between Dec. 15, 2007 and Jan. 6, 2008, and your third night is on us! Plus, indulge in a host of privileges and benefits that your family and friends will truly enjoy.

So, come home to Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila for the holidays and take pleasure in a one-of-a-kind Christmas celebration.

For more information about the holiday room packages and promotions, call 245.1234.

Hip, stylish hotel in the Queen City of the South

A new level of excitement takes place at the Cebu Parklane International Hotel. Located in the heart of Cebu's premier shopping and business neighborhood, The Parklane is an ideal address for business and pleasure.

The Parklane commenced to operation on June 1-2, 2006. It has 216 elegantly furnished rooms and suites with a spectacular view of the city. Complete with state-of-the-art technology and superb amenities, each guest room is equipped with individually controlled air-conditioning, private bath tub and shower, cable television, broadband Internet access, mini-bar, PDR/DVD entertainment, safety deposit box, hair dryer, coffee and tea making facility.

The main lobby is spacious and well lit with its custom-designed glass chandeliers and elegant chandeliers. The Boat Bistro serves coffee and great desserts in a relaxing nook at the lobby. The Metro Bar is a sassy wine and cigar lounge that pulsates with nightly live music. Manuel's Restaurant serves a wide variety of sumptuous local and international dishes and the Cebuano favorite lechon. Basil's Pool Bar and Restaurant serves delicious grills and fresh seafood

amid the picturesque view of the Cebu Business Park.

The hotel also has luxurious and value-packed meeting and social function facilities, outstanding pool and Jacuzzi and gym for use of guests.

The Parklane boasts of six function halls ideal for meetings, corporate events and private parties. The hotel's catering team provides the best breakfast, lunch and dinner menus suited to the discriminating tastes of the guests.

The hotel is owned and operated by Visayan Power Venture Development Corp, which is also in the hotel property, for inquiries and reservations, call its Manila sales office at 813-0084 or (032) 415-7000 in Cebu.

Tiny tunes, big band

From page F1

PYSB come from a varied strata society, but it's mainly because of their talent that are chosen them to come onboard."

In another interview Irene M. Atienza who is the chair of The Young Musicians Development Or. (parent.com which helps support the PYSB results, "They rehearsals for PYSB on every Saturday and we didn't know that these kids were actually playing and rehearsing on their own. It seems a lot where a bunch of teenagers would rather spend their Saturday afternoons rehearsing classical pieces than going to the mall or hanging around."

Indeed, malls have turned out to be a venue for the PYSB to showcase their music rather than a place to just hang around. The PYSB have also performed in private functions although they sometimes have to be "paired" down in number as not all venues can accommodate a 62-member band.

Camp songs and stories

The way the music camp and participation in the PYSB has had a great impact on its youthful members. Estella Bondoc, "The summer music camp is an event where mostly young musicians converge to learn techniques, hone their talent and playlist their future."

A lot of exchanges happen not only between tutors and participants, but also among participants. Alongside with learning advanced techniques in playing their instrument, they are given a crash course on music theory, rudiments and history. It is also in camps that newbies share experiences and ideals of our young musicians. Some of them learn to play an instrument as a hobby. Many participants are undecided on whether they will pursue music as a career or not.

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To watch them kids at 'play'

PYSB Jazz Holiday
Dec. 9, 2007 (Sunday) at 5:30 p.m. and Dec. 10, 2007 (Monday) at 1:30 p.m.

Cecilio P. Bautista Auditorium
GSIS Plaza, Ayala corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City

Interests, queries and suggestions can be emailed to Annabel B. Custodio at 09154400526, bondoc@edmicom.com.ph pasig-mercantile@yahoo.com

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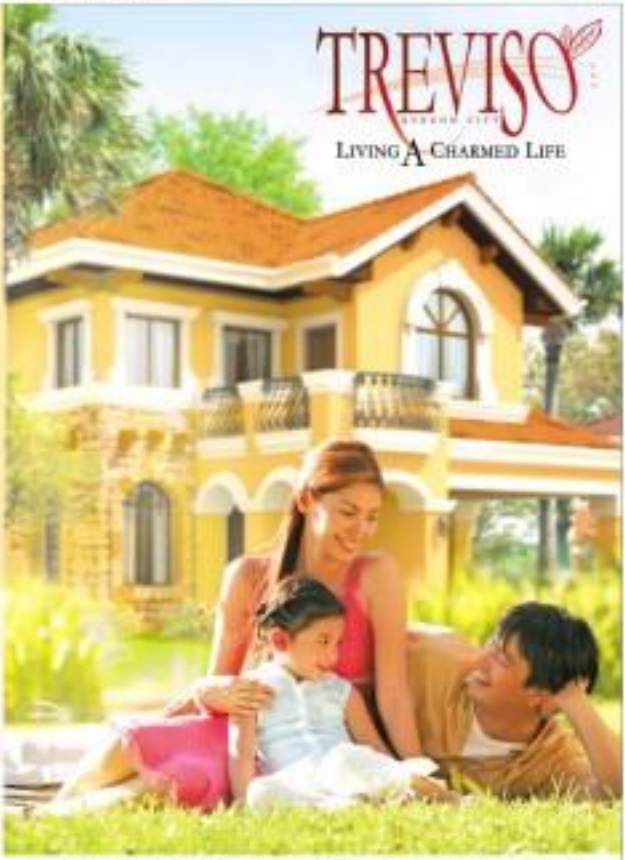

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IT'S A DIFFERENT kind of reality show for Kelly Osbourne.

KELLY with her fellow waitresses in Japan

TEA TIME. Kelly found out what it was like to be a geisha.

SUPER EXCLUSIVE

Memoirs of an Osbourne

Kelly Osbourne tries to turn Japanese in her three-episode special for Discovery Travel & Living

By Piers Pistor

KELLY OSBOURNE LIKES Japanese toilets. "I want to get one for my house," she said.

She had the chance to explore Japan and its hi-tech restrooms when she went to the country to shoot her TV special "Kelly Osbourne: Turning Japanese."

Over three hour long episodes (that will be aired on Discovery Travel & Living on Tuesdays and Saturdays starting Dec. 4), Kelly explores both the traditional and bizarre facets of life in Japan. She takes a total plunge into Tokyo culture by taking a wide range of jobs and participating in different activities. She waitresses in a 9-inch maid's outfit, provides lovers with sex toys at a hotel, trains with a samurai, becomes a Buddhist nun, works as a teacher and joins a highly respected geisha house in Kyoto.

In this Super exclusive, she talks about what it was like to leave home for a foreign culture immersion and her quest for inner calm and peace.

What made you say yes to this project?

I love Japan and I think it is such an amazing country and we've given the opportunity to really explore it from all angles, how could I say no?

What was it like being away from home to film the show?

I must admit that I got very lonely because there was such a language barrier and because I couldn't speak to anyone aside from the crew (who were mostly men) and my interpreter, Yumi (who was awesome) but I just really missed my mom and dad a lot.

What was the impact of this experience on you? Did it change you in any way?

It changed me in so many ways! I learned so much about respect and patience in particular. Especially when I was learning about becoming a geisha. I went to Kinkaku-ji (one of three tasks were stalled) and I learned that there is a reason and purpose for things. For example, how you turn the tea cup with the prettiest design to face the person that you are giving the tea to in order to express, "You're my guest, you get the nicest cup."

What did you love the most about your Japan experience?

How much I learned and what I was able to see and experience. Not many people can say that they were let into the secret world of a geisha's life or went to a love hotel or were to see the world's biggest fish market. I went to an unbelievably hard bar-restaurant. I don't like fish and I was addicted by the very first one while and were able to pick out which whale they wanted from pictures on the wall, although those are just my beliefs.

I also loved going to see the Gold Fish show. It was one of the most amazing shows I had ever seen! I wanted to go see it a million times. I have recommended the show to all of my friends who have gone to Japan since then and they all say it was the most amazing thing they had ever seen.

What was the best part for you?

Everything was the best part for me! I loved the restaurant where men catered to women, becoming one of the first western girls to be allowed into a geisha's world, learning the art of flamenco, working in a love hotel and how sperm-clean Japanese

And the worst?

The worst part for me was missing my family and not being able to communicate with very many people during my stay since I could not speak the language. It was hard going to an interpreter and asking for things as simple as a toothbrush since I am used to doing things on my own, and not having the ability to do those things annoyed me because I like doing them myself.

Was working in a Tokyo love hotel interesting?

It was very interesting to say the least! I saw some really crazy things going on because there were cameras in each room of the hotel and we saw everything they were doing! Also, I am a very helpful person, so when they told me one of my jobs was to go in and clean the rooms after people left, I just couldn't do it.

I loved the way the Gion Hotel was decorated though. There was one room in particular that had a bed set ballroom-style on the top of the way (the bed used on the bottom of it was a sex swing and the idea that people came up with in there were very interesting)!

What was it like to train to be a geisha?

That was so amazing. I learned an unbelievable amount from it. The women in there were so polite, ladies and so respectful and absolutely beautiful. I went in there under the assumption that geishas were prostitutes and I learned that they give up their lives at only 15 years old and are only allowed to write to their parents, and give up everything to strive to learn the profession of things (the perfection of serving tea, dancing, singing, entertaining, etc).

They can't be seen as amazing as well! I thought that designer clothes were expensive, but their incredible. Kimonos can cost tens of thousands of pounds!

Do you have plans of going back?

Definitely. I was actually going to plan a trip in the New Year with a bunch of my friends.

Why should people watch this show?

Because it's funny! And the trip really did change me and I want me one that is the show through all the fish out of water situations I was put in.

Kelly Osbourne: Turning Japanese premieres on Discovery Travel & Living on Dec. 4, 10p.m.

IT WAS a total Japanese immersion for Ozzy Osbourne's daughter.

CULTURE shock. Kelly in Japan

Nokia and Local//:e! – making great music

ALWAYS ON THE CUSP OF innovation, electronica is a musical genre that thrives on the continued development of technology. Taking its pulse from the relentless rhythm of the clubs, the culture that surrounds it revels in the present, the pounding beat of this moment. But it's also one that's dynamic enough to listen and heed the call of the future. It's no entertainment to envision that much of these changes are brought about and helped along by how we communicate with each other.

Being the world's leader in mobile technology, Nokia is about making these connections. In line with the unveiling of their new music phone—the Nokia 5310 XpressMusic—Nokia launches Local//:e!'s 23rd compilation CD featuring the best in homegrown electronica by stellar talents from the scene like Funk ma, Orbis Mundis, Sid vanVliet and Rubber Inc.

Considered by many as one of the key pioneers in live dance music in the country, Rubber Inc. is composed of producers Mael de Rosenbaum and Mikki Lopez. Fresh from performing in Cologne, the duo just wrapped up recording sessions with German act, the Teichmann Brothers, recently. Lopez, a product of the Ateneo College of Music, says he likes the fact that the Nokia 5310 XpressMusic offers up to 16 hours of music playback. "With an optional 4GB microSD card," he says, "the memory can hold up to 3,000 songs."

One of the finer live electronica acts in the country, Silverfilter has toured and performed all over the country living gigs in various venues in Manila, Boracay and Davao—so name but a few—his versatile talents and commitment to getting his audiences a great show has earned him a considerable following. Given that music plays a big part of his life, he's particularly excited about the Nokia 5310 XpressMusic's dedicated music keys and 3.5mm AV jack as he has a wide choice of hi-fi headphones to plug in.

A veteran of the scene for several years, Frank Arey hosted his shows as a DJ on clubs. Apart from spinning tech house and techno, his sets incorporated samples and drum machines as well as turntablists to create his own blend of live electronica. His considerable talents have since garnered international acclaim. He was one of the first Filipinos to be signed by French label Fusion Recordings while his music has also been included in several compilations for Radio1FM Pro Mix. The Nokia 5310 XpressMusic's iconic design is "strikingly slim and light." At only 9.9 mm thick and weighing less than 71 grams, he says it "fits comfortably in my pocket."

Nokia's launch of Local//:e!'s second CD is in line with Local//:e!'s goal of broadening electronica's appeal and the further development of the music scene. Collaborating with musicians such as massively talented violinist Joy Cajucom and legendary blues guitarist Jun Lopito, Local//:e! is like Nokia in encouraging these connections. And as much as electronica is inspired by technology, the Nokia 5310 XpressMusic makes mobile technology so inspiring as music.

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SMX

Creativity — that, for Kenji Ikeda, is what we need now, especially in these times of great concern

Sunny Day Sweeny

Roar for the risk-taker

INSTALLATION VIEW. Lisson with Arts Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, INC, USA

By Jason Gabelle

ARTIST KENJI IKEDA knows a thing or two about risk-taking.

Born in Kyoyaki, Japan, New York-based Ikeda's paintings have the elements of fun, mind, eyes, and soul, and what a delight yet clear statement.

Ikeda is a core member of the Superstruct, an illustrious Tokyo-New York-based artist collective. He has done large-scale public mural paintings in Tokyo, New York, Ghana, and the rural town of Lumberton, North Carolina, where the artist collective was founded.

When he was invited to translate his work into three-dimensional objects via digital fabrication, Ikeda's free-fit sensational forms turned into a crystal black and white fun-fest.

There is density to all his compositions but the lines remain clean. His structure, which has been compared to Sacha, surrealist K. K. Jagar, "struggles to reveal something deep within the realm of things." These were Ikeda's own words.

Even Tago multi-colored public murals on small paintings, from book illustrations to film soundtracks—Ikeda has proven his openness to all forms. In 2004, he designed Absolut's limited-edition advertising campaign.

His whole collection stirs up a negotiation of identity in a world where technical, multi-cultural, and cultural borders stand by flimsily.

Lessening about unfamiliar things requires risk. For Ikeda, it's about realizing that natural risk-taking is good.

COMBATLEFT HAND. Acrylic on canvas

BITS AND PIECES

MIRAGE'S artwork is fun and scary in strongly inspired by nature, birds, flowers, fabrics, and hand-painted signage in Southeast Asia. His works also have strong reflections to the vibrancy of American disenfranchised street systems.

The theme that runs through the early body of work is a story he has created, in which we are his universe exists. His paintings, drawings, and films provide glimpses into this wonderful language of lines and symbols, which take on new meanings as they are combined and recombined throughout his various and figurative works.

Ikeda makes his work for an open mind. He is excited to walk in the middle part of the viewer that is not yet set—like the artist (in a child who has never seen and has never been traumatized by the crazy side of the outside world.

14 FLUTTERING BIRDS. Acrylic on canvas

Seven questions

When did you realize to become an artist?

I don't think there was a moment when I decided to be an artist or something. I guess I tried to be myself. Fortunately, I'm paying the monthly money sent by being an artist. (Laughs) Thank you to all who support me!

Who/what are your influences?

Almost every thing and everyone I come across with my friends, the four seasons, the movement of stars, dancing to the tone of house music at the break of dawn, and good times with my wife.

Talk about your colors.

You know, sometimes, color is like the "joker" in the card game.

What about the language and icons that you use?

A primary symbol in my artwork—a snail/dragon/alien—is a emotion. It's like a canvas—like the meaning of a hand holding something that is really there.

Tattoo a meaning from your studio.

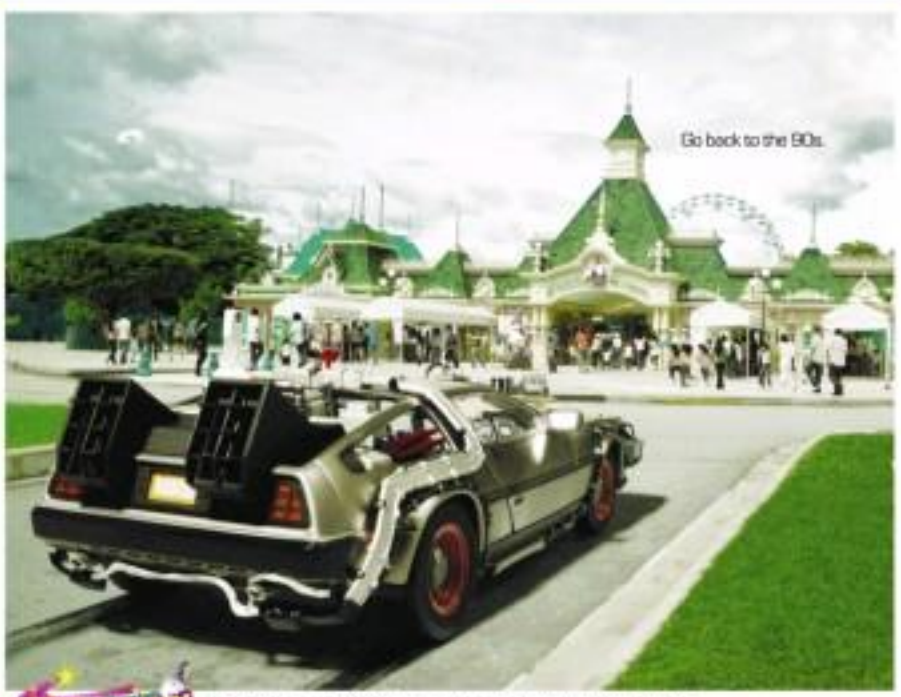
I sipped and swallowed a cup of house paint, combining it with a glass of wine. I was serious or asked.

What are your plans for the future?

When I reach 70 or 80, I'll become a cool hippie. When I'm dead, I'll come back to pick my wife up near she grows old a sigh.

What's it like in the universe that you've created?

It's a lot about the inconsistencies that's present in all of mankind. It's about struggling. It's about life. It's about love.



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Rock the Riles 2007

FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS, Rock Ed Philippines has been celebrating Human Rights Day (Dec. 10) with a mammoth gathering of young artists, students, teachers, poets, photographers and etc.

Their biggest accomplishment is that we are able to provide the young Filipinos a venue to take a visible stand for Human Rights. Arguably, one of the most creative Human Rights Day rallies in the world, Rock the Riles has attracted the attention of the UN Millennium Campaign as they have nominated it coveted it since it's inception. First held in 2005, participation in Rock the Riles has grown ten fold.

Held every Sunday closest to the official International Human Rights Day (Dec. 10 in the official date, this year it will be held on the 9th of December) we transform eight SRT station into eight performance spaces in celebration of it. Each station has a UN Millennium Development Goal as a theme: Hunger, Poverty, Education, Child and Infant Health, AIDS and preventable diseases, Environmental Sustainability, Global Trade, (sorry).

It is held on a Sunday so we didn't cause people skipping work or school, it is held in the train stations so that we don't cause any street traffic or jamming. School administrators, student organizations, NGOs, production houses all contributes to this celebration.

Taking a visible stand for human rights is always a worthwhile cause. The Gawad Tanglaw Awards Banquet in its more over 30 bands, view exhibits of excellent photographers, listen to spoken word and poetry performed live over is just human. I think the participation in Rock the Riles is always at demand because most of us are hungry to lend our voices to this global push for equality, justice, and peace. I think it is also important for us young Filipinos to know that we are many in this battle against apathy.

I suppose once the feeling of "being alone in this fight" is gone, we are all to be more things and decisions to defend human rights. Sometimes, that's what it's all about.

READ more on the past two celebrations, photos included:

Riles 2005 info: http://rockedphilippines.org/projects_redmadeinhell.html

Riles 2006 info: http://rockedphilippines.org/projects_redmadeinhell.html

Toying with the idea of better films

DIRECTOR Dante

PRODUCER Gaia and prod manager Dawn

PRODUCER Jasmin

PANORAMAHIA, OR IS A NEW breed of young filmmakers emerging from both independent and mainstream film backgrounds. Their hope is to marry the synergies of both worlds — the creative energy of indie spirit and the sound business structures of mainstream cinema. They wish to be a part of The Inspired Age of Philippine Cinema — much like the one the world experienced before — during the prolific times of the Golden Age of Philippine Cinema.

Jeanelyn Kabigsa, winner of the prestigious Star Award for Independent Digital Filmmaking, ruling the first season of Cinemalaya Film Festival in its starting years. Gaia Gonzalez (another pavilioner) has been working for Star Cinema for five years as Mother Lauren' assistant working on the most mainstream projects as they can get. Dawn Yeo is the director and has been in show biz, rubbing elbows with celebrities since the time he started his career as production designer for a film called Super B (he just recently won for his production designer work in Cinemalaya Finalist "Foxy." Then Yeo's film offering is a 35mm film entitled "Pisonet." To be shot entirely on live sound and showcasing a cast of internationally-awarded Filipino artists and a very bankable lead actress, in the person of Ms. Judy Ann Santos, for this film their goal is to present a more feminist and social Philippines. Shooting soon from the cool temples of poverty and slum, sex and gambling trade and violence proliferating our Filipino indie films. There is a need to venture into a film project presenting to the world a Philippines that is rich in nature, with lush and pristine mountains and beaches. The shooting of Pisonet will be entirely on locations in the beautiful island of Cuyo, Palawan. The same island group as the world renowned Underground River.

Panoramahia's intention is to make high-quality films that will be enjoyed by the Filipino people and engage an international audience. Planning months in some cases as a film that will have a compelling story backed up by technical excellence and high-caliber stars and crew and hope to engage audiences across economic or cultural borders.

After a dozen film productions in the last fifteen years, there has been a resurgence of production in films but more in the independent side. Because of technology, proliferation of film festivals and the formation of this new breed of filmmakers, a lot of indie films are coming out of the woodworks. The downside is a lot of these film makers are not professionals. Filmmaking as some have neglected to consider, is still a business. A lot of these filmmakers invested their sweat and blood for film projects that would not even pay a month's rent. A lot of these good intentioned filmmakers are now languishing in obscurity jobs trying to make ends meet ... while their brilliant works of art did not even experience distribution and sadly for some were not even screened. Simply because their films projects were not backed up by sound business plans to the first place.

What could possibly help, you? Panoramahia gives some of their suggestions:

- **Proper valuation of all collaborators**

"We believe in valuating our talents the right way. The 'indie' word has been exploited enough so that now the word is synonymous to film productions that leave 'no talent feel' or 'TV' and doing production on horrible conditions. We want to endorse this by treating our cast and crew with the respect they deserve.

"First of all we are implementing an equity sharing scheme for all our collaborators including not only the investors but also creative production team and cast as well. Because of our limited resources we will still compensate them 'initially' with 'indie' rates, but their talents and efforts are valuated properly through a profit-sharing program we have agreed with them in writing. Each cast or crew that were not compensated fully because of capital constraints are given an equitable ownership of the film project so that once the film does earn money, they earn according to their allotted percentage. This way the talents that they give us primarily in the production are translated into tangible investments for them. Right now, from the main actress to our production designers, lighting directors and wardrobe are enjoying this kind of arrangement."

- **Empowered business plan**

"Since we have regrettably distributed the risk and success of the film not only for investors but also for the production people we are responsible for supporting the film project with a diligent and progressive business plan. As most independent filmmakers are primarily concerned with just making their films, we are supporting them by making distribution and marketing our primary responsibility. Our film projects are assessed to maximize distribution and will enjoy intensive promotional and marketing campaigns.

"Our total film offering Pisoneg will be shown in theaters nationwide on April 30, 2008 to payday and holiday weekend. The grand playdate is already reserved for us with the SM, SM's National Cinema Association of the Philippines. And because of the marketability of our project we are already in research negotiations with distributors for that film not only for local but international release as well.

"There are simple strategies cumulated as we matched the different requirements and dynamics we learned from the different engagements we have had individually ... both in mainstream and independent filmmaking ... both in terms of resources, namely the more than a year time location has been part of financing development for different local and international independent films now, including a Hollywood project to be shot in the Philippines and an overseas experimental film to be shot in Manila. Gaia has been involved in international film festivals and film markets because of her various projects with Star Cinema. But this design has been inspired primarily by our quest to have excellent film production processes for these filmmakers and their desire to uplift the Philippine film industry as a whole.

"We hope and dream that in no less more than in the Filipino audience and the Filipino filmmaker a new season of relevance and creative film projects will come about and create and engage audience not only in the Philippines but all over the world as well."

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IN THIS ISSUE
William Holden's Fil-Am wife chose love over career /K4

SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Nina P. Aldaba

Amy Adams is now a Hollywood princess

ADAMS: Shares the screen with Streep and McDermaid in upcoming movies. AFP/K2

LOS ANGELES—When Amy Adams was nominated for an Academy Award, she still lived in the rundown apartment she rented when she moved to Los Angeles with movie-star dreams. "It was a bit of a dust," she shared. "And the carpet hadn't been changed in 14 years!"

Charmed career

Fast-forward to today, and Adams, 33, is now a Hollywood princess, literally. She plays an animated Disney princess who comes to life in "Enchanted"—and her charmed career will not let down the screen with two of her idols: Meryl Streep

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Outstanding performances buoy up sluggish actioner

By Hosteni Rove

THE FIRST 15 MINUTES OF THE ACTION movie, "The Kingdom," are misleading. Beginning with a quick montage summarizing the United States' gnarly, decades-old, oil-based relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and then, segueing into a harrowing terrorist attack on an American residential compound in that country (vaguely reminiscent of the bombing of Khobar Towers back in 1996), the film would have you think that it's a smart geopolitical thriller that will raise incisive questions about US involvements in the Middle East.

Not exactly, however, leans more towards the bullets-and-blood trajectory of "Rambo" than to the deconstructing, intelligent explorations of "Syriana" which isn't really as bad as it sounds. While not as compelling as the latter, "The Kingdom" fortunately doesn't descend to the simplistic, jingoism-leveled lows the former.

Instead, in an effort to be both action-packed and smart, it occupies an uneasy middle ground that will leave most of its viewers feeling unsatisfied while it's playing, but will nonetheless provide a certain level of enjoyment.

Deft hand

Helmed by the same-named director Peter Berg, the film is interesting enough, boasts of a competent cast, and includes some outstanding performances. Berg has a deft hand with the visuals and with the action sequences—though the camera is sometimes too shaky to the point of making one feel uncomfortable and the movie to have passed by ill-timed pacing.

The tension that is successfully established in the beginning loses its momentum shortly thereafter, as the momentum slows down to a clog that's only occasionally unclogged by arbitrating bullets and explosions.

After the exploratory in Saudi Arabia—which kills more than a hundred people, including two FBI agents—the story shifts to the US, where a four-person FBI team examines the case. By way of blackmail in exchange for the kingdom to investigate the blast. They only have five days to conduct their investigation, and there isn't much room for the fact that they're only there by sufferance and are not really allowed to move around freely.

Starring Academy Award-winning actors, Jamie Foxx and Chris Cooper, the cast is completed by Jennifer Garner, Jason Bateman ("Arrested Development") and Ashraf Barhom. Best is again Ronald Emmy, the leader of a team made up of Sykes (Cooper), Mayes (Garner) and Leamy (Bateman).

Despite the presence of two Oscar-caliber actors, however, the most noteworthy performance is that of Barhom, who plays Col. Faris Al-Ghazi, the team's liaison and glorified babysitter. The Arab-Israeli actor brings his otherwise sketchy character to life, frustrated life, and additional depth and resonance to the band he develops with Foxx's Leamy.

Proficiency

The actors' proficiency can't make up for the sluggish pace, however, as well as the exploitative feel of the director it uses (including a scene recalling the execution of journalist Daniel Pearl). Still, it does have a semi-satisfying ending. If you can get past the film's humbo-esque characters, there are insights here that are worth pondering about.

FOXX. Plays an FBI agent in Peter Berg's film.

Iza Calzado teams up with Ken Zhu in 'Batanes'

By Rony Rivera

WITH ITS TITLE, YOU MIGHT think "Batanes" is a special documentary on National Geographic. It could have been, but it is not. A joint venture of Ignite Media and GMA 7, "Batanes" is essentially a picturesque romance, and an intimate portrait of a romantic relationship with the sun. It is written (and codirected) by Adolf Alix Jr. and Dave Hulogos. The story is a wonder.

It is a whirlwind romance when Iza (Iza Calzado) meets Fotino (Ken Chong Bautista), and leftover love to Sampson when they meet.

Fate tries to salute to the beauty and wit of Iza, but finds the sea threatening. One day, Iza discovers treasure from fishing, and she blames no one but the sea.

Stranger

On the anniversary of his death, she sails to Isojos island and get stranded in a storm. She sees a man lying in the sand. The stranger turns out to be Sampson (Ken Chong). Iza (Iza Calzado) her boat after his fever subsides and takes him back with her to the village.

The villagers are reluctant to accept the Taiwanese since most fishermen from Taiwan fish illegally in Batanes. As Fotino tries to take care of Iza, the secrets to be drawn towards him. There, despite language and cultural differences, love beckons.

The role of Iza was originally meant for Judy Ann Santos, who liked the part but had to beg off due to a previous commitment. The popular actress suggested Iza, who then thinking her breaking her screen in "The Rubio," the English-language remake of Yam Laranas' horror film, "Signos." In the future, Iza says she would like to play one of the hot roles similar to her character in another indie movie, "Manic Silangan Dance."

CALZADO. Bajo the hot days was indie filmmaking.

David Maloon is the CEO of Ignite Media, a post production company. He is a video and film editor, creative director, systems specialist, longtime soul designer. His credits as a film editor include "Madrasta," "The Promise" and "Shambles."

Amy Adams is now a ...

From page B1

and Frances McDormand.

Luck

Part of what got her this far is luck, Adams claimed, her willowy strawberry blond hair nicked under a gray-hair cap as she sipped tea at the Four Seasons dining bar, easily one of her usual haunts when in town. Another is due to her unflagging focus—a quality that's made her an in-demand actress, but as a consequence, not a consistent one. She's a "kind of boring" person.

"I need hobbies," she added. "The more I focused on my career, the more I realized I didn't really become very uninteresting. I'm going to spend some time researching what my true interests are outside of acting—because I really love what I do."

Adams was still a kid when she decided performing would be her profession. She honed her dancing skills and eventually moved to Minnesota, where she worked in musical theater. Something told her she could act, too at first, she didn't believe it.

First professional acting job

"As a dancer, you're not encouraged to speak," she explained. "It took me a long time to be brave enough to say I wanted to be an actress"—about three years, to be specific. Once she achieved, edged it, she then moved to Los Angeles, and within two weeks, she'd landed her first professional acting job!

A few years later, Amy was already cobbling alliances with her idols at those parties and enjoying accolades for her outstanding performance in 2005's "Junebug," earning an Oscar nomination so early in her career didn't diminish her focus, but it did shift her perspective: "It was like, well, now what? But now, I can just focus on the journey—what stories do I want to tell, and what characters do I want to play?"

The options have been coming in ample supply. Adams was cast in "Enchanted" before earning the Oscar nomination, but the film heralds a slew of projects. She'll next be seen in the Christmas release, "Charlie Wilson's War," opposite Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts and Philip Seymour Hoffman.

After that comes "Miss Bridgerton Lives for a Day" a film that stars Pamela Hickmand. Adams is also set to appear in "Sunshine Cleaning" with Alan Arkin and Emily Blunt, and she just started work on "Sleuth," with Harris Hoffman and Meryl Streep.

Curiosity

In each of the films, Adams brings the same sunny spirit that caught the eye of Kevin Smith: "She makes me curious about characters and likes playing women's struggling with questions of faith. Some of that curiosity comes from her Mormon upbringing. But, it also mirrors her own quest for balance and fulfillment.

"I like to be intellectual. I'm not good at the balancing act of working and then living life," she mused. "I get self-absorbed when I'm working. In an ideal world, I'd eventually be able to achieve balance. I don't know if that's possible—but let's seek and see!"

AP

Festive film premieres ...

From page B4

is also holding a holiday sale until tomorrow, with up to 30-percent discount on great finds.

'Three Days of Darkness'

"Three Days of Darkness" (Telling stone ng Kadiliman) starts its run on Dec. 12 at Solaire at Bohemian Modern of Galleria. The comedy-offering stars Kathryn Santos, Gwen Garci, Precious Adams and Ben Delgo. The screenplay is directed by Elmer dela Cruz, some of whose movies have won honors here and abroad.

Movies on TV

On HBO today at 3 p.m., "Academy." Tomorrow at 11 a.m., "Pale Rider." Dec. 3 at 7 a.m., "Sweet Liberty." Dec. 4 at 7 p.m., "Star of the World" (2000). Dec. 8 at 7 p.m., "Planes, Trains & Automobiles." Dec. 9 at 7 a.m., "The Legend of Bagger Vance." Dec. 7 at 3 p.m., "Fly Away Home."

On Cinemax today at 7 a.m., "Every Which Way But Loose." Tomorrow at 11 p.m., "Carolina Skeletons." Dec. 3 at 3 p.m., "Blindfold: Acts of Obsession." Dec. 4 at 1 p.m., "Blue Thunder." Dec. 5 at 11 a.m., "The Thing." Dec. 6 at 3 p.m., "Chameleon." Dec. 7 at 1 p.m., "The Lost Boys."

'Romeo and Juliet'

Canteenpala Theater stages Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" starting Dec. 7 (10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) at the AFP Theater in Quezon City. Marcos Ciriaco and Lauren Raymundo play the star-crossed lovers. Call 899-3703 or 896-3303.

Mall shows

Join Mall Chan premiere by "Love Letters and Other Scenes" today at 3 p.m. at SM Bacolod. Cinema 6 hosts performers at SM Megamall on Dec. 2 at 3 p.m.

And Bembya at Edgar's new "Isdol" album will be formally launched at Eastwood City Central Plaza at 6 p.m. on Dec. 3.

Nickelodeon's Big Help Campaign

From 2 to 6 p.m. today at the Mall of Asia Complex, Nickelodeon's Big Help Campaign culminates with a big bang. Hop on the shaking stages with hosts Bella Joseph and Sam Concepcion, join the games, and help build a house for a UN Batang Bayani Village.

'Ang Lalake sa Perla'

"Ang Lalake sa Perla" is now available on DVD and VCD. The romantic-drama film topbills Harry Lucot, Karla de Leon, Jennifer Lee, Sharon and Alan Dizon.

'Ratatouille'

The fun animated feature, "Ratatouille," is now on DVD, and comes with a sumptuous selection of bonus features, including deleted scenes and a behind-the-scenes look at how master chef Remy—voice of actor Thomas Bellet—used his expertise to shape the film, and several short films.

'Gone, Baby, Gone'

Back day to the 70s. 2,000 children are reported missing in the area. Edge-of-your-seat thriller, "Gone, Baby, Gone," follows the explosive case of one missing little girl, leading to a labyrinthine maze of evil and corruption. "Gone, Baby, Gone" has been acclaimed by critics and will be screened in Ayala Mall Cinemas starting Dec. 5.

"RATATOUILLE." Pixar's acclaimed animated feature is now on DVD.

big debut last season, a behind-the-

movie itself elicits more silence than laughs. In fact, even more chuckles are hard to come by, which, for a comedy, makes for tragedy, indeed.

Directed by David Dobkin ("Wedding Crashers"), the film has Vaughn in his fast-talking comedic persona playing the role of Brad Anderson, who's always the voice of reason, who's already proven himself in comedy before, to curiously flat havoc. His final, despite the rapid speech, looks rather tired and bleary-eyed, maybe because the script asks him to take his character's issues seriously as though this were a heavy, tear-jerking drama and not One 90-minute comedy it purports to be.

The entire movie, in fact, dwells seriously on its characters' various issues instead of trying to make fun of them in a comedy should. And when it's not serving off tortured-school and serious, it gets sappy while you, the viewer, find yourself uncomfortably placed in the cringe-worthy middle.

Pitch-perfect

While Vaughn muddles his way through, Giamatti, in his role as the movie's put-upon Dame Shirley, is just about pitch-perfect, though he does look two well-padded rows for his role as the famously surland critic.

Rhonda Richardson plays Linda's wife, Annette. Kathy Baker is Fred and Shirley's mother, Rachel Weiss, as an improbably beautiful English rose-type, is not much to Fred's girlfriend, and Kevin Spacey is an effective cop expert.

Everybody makes an effort, but not even the most wonderful acting in the world can save this premise for a romp storyline that's full of inconsistencies—and a lesser don't obviously in the wrong place.

Gift of knowledge

MOHAMAE GUTORATO—Early this month, the San Isidro Elementary School in South Cotabato became the 1300th school to receive educational television (DTV) facilities and Broadband video modules ("Sagasuyoka, Asosiar Ito!") from Team Mohamae.

The event was attended by Education Secretary Jesli Lapus and Undersecretary Dina Ocampo, the Landbuyer. The turnover also marked the official end of The Knowledge Channel (TKC) project in this part of the country.

Team Mohamae's 41-million United states-aid program that aims to boost quality of education in conflict-affected areas in the country. It has improved the academic performance of grade school and high school students through ETV programs covering the English basic learning competencies in Math, Science and English from 2004.

Poverty alleviation

Secretary Lapus said: "Education is the key. I measure in poverty alleviation. It's an excellent tool used as an instrument of peace in areas of conflict."

According to Irene Isaval, Team Mohamae project director, Knowledge Channel has made an impact on the academic performance of its end users, especially in the province of Lanao del Sur. Although all 15 schools with ETS have posted significant improvements in all subject areas in the Division Achievement Tests (DAT).

The Habib Mole Andalini Elementary School rose from 23th place (43.03 percent) in 2005-2006 to seventh place (61.39 percent) in 2006-2007. Bayanihan Elementary School also improved from 27th place (50.25 percent) in 2005-2006 and bagged first place (68 percent) in 2006-2007 to the DAT.

Infrastructure

Some local government units have supported Team Mindanao's project by paying their schools electric bills, improving ICTs viewing rooms, providing seats for children to sit on and more importantly, maintaining and operating the satellite dishes and other equipment with other panels below the infrastructure sun installed.

Isaval added: "Even! Tinel children now enjoy the advantages of having educational television like their Manila counterparts. It offers equalizing teaching and learning opportunities."

***

Join the Buenos Photo Safari from Dec. 27 to 30 and Jan. 4-7 if you wish to experience the closest thing to winter in this country. The Buenos Children's Choir will sing Christmas carols in Tahini Church, which boasts of a rich, unique view of the province's hills and the sea. Visit www.travelbuenosmis.com or e-mail marcelynmarcelyn@yahoo.com or call 4691767.

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Vaughn's Christmas flick botches ...

From page B3

Crime novelist marvels at his luck in Hollywood

NEW YORK—BOOKSTORES ASK [illegible] ends the reader of novelist-director-actor-screenwriter Ben Affleck. It is the silent screen—of those who've been burned when they do. Count Dennis Lehane among the double-hatted-in-fives.

First, Clint Eastwood made a film classic out of the respected crime writer's "Mystic River," with that scorching, Oscar-winning performance by Penn.

Then, Ben Affleck made his highly acclaimed directorial debut recently with "Gone Baby Gone." Within days, came word that Martin Scorsese would direct the author's "Shutter Island" next year—with Leonardo DiCaprio to star in it!

Fortuitous news

With that short list of fortuitous events, Lehane passionate himself almost embarrassed, "It's egregious," he means. "I didn't tell anybody. My fiancée said, 'Why don't you call people?' I answered: Let's just pile it on!"

So, what is Lehane's explanation? He takes a seat, he means, not in the originality of his stories' plots, going on his to to say his plots "could be found on an episode of 'CSI' or 'Law & Order.'"

He's merely happy to take credit for doing what he does very well—which is to write stories, viscerally undispersed, and thought-provoking crime novels centered in the resident parts of Boston. His explanation for his success is simple: Pure luck. "I'm just the luckiest guy on the planet," he declares. "Because I'm Irish. I keep looking at the sky and waiting for it to fall!"

Hollywood observers will hasten to add that the Lehane recipe requires, in addition to luck and a generous helping of talent, a healthy serving of the cosmic, "success-breeds-success."

Track record

"Everybody loves a winner—especially in Hollywood," explains film historian, Leonard Maltin. "So, when you start building a track record, people in the industry respond to that. They're trying to attract a top-level cast. They may not have ever read the books, but they know that the first one had a movie demonstrated that it can do it (Scorsese's 'Mean Streets')."

Still, Maltin agrees, "It's a pretty stunning letter of filmmakers to be attracted to one writer's work. I don't know how much precedent there is for it, if any. Especially one that's so close together."

Actually, before he penned "Mystic River" in 2001, Lehane had a loyal following with his series of his detective novels featuring homegrown Boston private eye, Patrick Kenzie and his girlfriend, Angie Gennaro.

They began with "A Drink Before the War" in 1994, but they truly took off with the fourth, [illegible] "Gone, Baby, Gone," a dark tale about an abducted child. (Per that film, Ben Affleck took the romance out of the title and cast his brother, Casey Affleck, in the lead.)

First book

"There've been huge rollers in our store," reveals Lisa Brackett, owner of The Mystery Bookshop in New York City. "From his first book, Dennis's an marvelous Lehane has been one of the top writers in America in the crime novel genre."

The novelist should be judged by "the voice standards you'd bring to any filmmaker," Penelope means. "He creates settings, and characters who have a heart, and his dialogue is absolutely believable!"

Indeed, all of Lehane's novels (in fact his related his eighth, a historical work called "The Given Day") have been set in Boston, his hometown. The owner of place that interests his work, film critic Stephen Hunter of The Washington Post states accurately, is a chief pleasure of Lehane's books, which are "like a map of backalley Marseillaise Renaissance, spread time walls there in new form, and you start swallowing your e's, then spitting them out in bi's."

LEHANE, Popular with Tinseltown's top filmmakers.

Lehane was born 42 years ago in the working-class neighborhood of Dorchester, the youngest of five children of Irish immigrants. His father worked in the shipping department of Jones Beverage, while his mother worked in a public school cafeteria.

Calling

After dropping out of college, he found his calling, and read "A Drink Before the War" while he was still in graduate school at Florida International University. "Boss, he moved back south.

His $1,000 advance was just enough "for a good meal, a couple word on, and some," so-handy not enough to quit his job or, a pushing toilet at the Hub Cafeteria, silent one with a murder's dispute.

In 1997, Lehane had moved up to house chauffeur and finally quit. "Gone, Baby Gone" came out the next year—a "current changes," Lehane admits. Of course, by chuckles, it didn't hurt that President Clinton was also now reading the Dorce One with the book tucked under his arm.

"After that book, I was suddenly living on good money," Lehane recounts. But, it was "Mystic River" in 2001, another supremely dark work about child abuse, murders and people doing wrong things, that propelled him to the bestsellers' list. AP

"MYSTIC RIVER" / Warner Bros. Picture for Sean Penn

AFFLECK, Directs his version of "Gone, Baby, Gone."

DI CAPRIO, Typifies Martin Scorsese's big-screen adaptations of "Shutter Island."

VALERIA MAZZA and GIANNI TI, Play lovebirds in "Privet Class."

Vaughn's Christmas flick botches its comedic potential

By Noelani Torre

ONE OF THE TWO UNEXPECTED things about the Christmas comedy, "Privet Class," is that it isn't very funny. Directed by Jon Vaughn (co-producer of Kung is that actors like Vince Vaughn, Paul Giamatti, Rachel Weisz, Rhonda Richardson, Kathy Bates and Kevin Spacey agreed to do the movie.

That th crimovie is not all that bizzar is unexpected because it's premise is one that already has a lot of comedic potential.

Tendency

The crazy Fellow-Privil, jolly old fart-ter's constantly older brother (played by Vaughn), who's been overlooked and overshadowed for most of his life. After all, it's hard to make yourself noticed if your brother happens to be a saint who has a tendency to give free stuff away.

The film's trailer was funny, but the

SEASONS 82

LG
Life's Good
In style.
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with LG Mobile.
KU380 is heavy on features but light on the pocket.
It is compact, stylish and has a soft, sleek slider design.
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• Internet functionality & fast network
• Full video telephony
• Dual camera (1.3MP and VGA camera)
• MP3/MP4 player
• Bluetooth connectivity
It's 3G technology at a price within your reach.
3G Experience
LGMobile
KU380

Festive film premieres on Hallmark

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS ON THE HALLmark Channel with three surprising viewing treats! Dec. 11 at 10 p.m., "12 Days of Christmas Eve," about an ambitious bridezilla who forgoes Christmas—only to end up in a hospital. He's given only 12 diseases to cut things straight... or else!

MONTAGE

Dec. 22 at 9 p.m., "Meet the Santas," about Nick Chase (Steve Guttenberg) getting married to a lovely gal (Crystal Bernard)—whose mother, unfortunately, owns doubles on Nick's county!

Also watch out for three Christmas movies: Dec. 15, "Fallen Angel." Dec. 16, "The Christmas Shoes." Dec. 17, "Mr. St. Nick." Dec. 18, "The Christmas Box." Dec. 19, "Santa Jr." Dec. 20, "Ghost Night." Dec. 21, "Malicious Murders: Ghosts of Christmas Past." Dec. 22, "A Christmas Wedding." And, Dec. 24, "A Christmas Carol."

DANNY PHANTOM. The animated show's holiday special will be telecast on Nickelodeon.

Have a Merry 'Nick-ence'

Join Nickelodeon's School Holiday Specials on a Double Trouble Marathon weekdays from Dec. 3 to 31, from 12 noon to 3 p.m., with SpongeBob SquarePants, Jimmy Neutron and Danny Phantom.

On Nickmas morning at 6:30 a.m. on "Shari Claus," Bart celebrates her first holiday season. At 9 a.m., on "Wonder Pets," Tuck, Ming-Ming and Linny save the reindeers in time for gift-giving. At 9:30 a.m. on "Boss The Replacers," Gene and Roderick run the tables on Santa—and give him a present. At 10 a.m., don't miss "The SpongeBob Christmas Special."

Other shows: 10:30 a.m., "Fairly Odd Parents." 11 a.m., "The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron." 11:30 a.m., "As Told by Ginger."

Plus: Two Holiday Movie Specials—Dec. 25 at 3 and 8:30 p.m., "The Jackets were—Jimmy Timmy Power Hour" Dec. 31 at 12 noon and 8:30 p.m., "My Life As a Teenage Robot." www.nickjokes.com

SOULMATES. Stars in Ellora and Cedric's suspense-thriller.

'Cassandra'

The producers of the hit trilogy, "Sam," have come up with a new night-mish thriller, "Cassandra," starring Shaneen Sotiangco as Victoria, who lands her first big role in her self-titled series "Carolyn" (Pink).

One night, Victoria is swept into the Fortuna underground area scene in the city's catacombs. Victoria finds herself lost in the darkness, pursued by someone or something!

Pink observes, "I was attracted to the story because it's very psychological. It's not your typical scary movie—it's a lot more intelligent. The most scary part is us human beings, how evil some of us can be." "Cassandra" is written and directed by David Elliott and Yuma Cuba.

At Enchanted Kingdom

Be at Enchanted Kingdom's Studio Theater Lobby at the Sweetdyn Plaza at 5 p.m. tomorrow to SpongeBob SquarePants down to the welcome park guests to the premiere of the latest rollerfun, "SpongeBob SquarePants, the Ride."

The 19-minute rollerfun is produced by the leader in motion simulators, GameWorks Entertainment. It is a hi-tech, interactive at Six Flags Over Texas, Le Bastille and Mirrorworlds.

WILSON, CHUANG SHERMAN. Sophie Rose Nisce's countercurrent in the play.

'TVH' goes to Iloilo

Monique Wilson teams up with Lynn Hershman and Lily Chu when the Host Voice Company brings Eve Ensler's acclaimed hit play, "The Vagina Monologues," to the CAP Auditorium in Iloilo City on Dec. 9, with performances at 3 and 7 p.m.

The controversial show, sponsored by the Pasay chapter of the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, aims to raise funds for the organization's Cervical Cancer Screening project for indigent women. Call Dr. Pearlie Cabajar at (033) 337-1600 or 0917 711 2307.

'Grosman at Zaffiro' auditions at UP

Dulaang UP announces auditions for actors and musicians for its next production, Francisco Balagtas' "Grosman at Zaffiro" on Dec. 3 and 5 (noon) to 9 p.m. at Teatro Orlegomeryo Hagan. Faculty Center, UP Diliman. The production is directed by Dr. Rolando Tolentino. Call Joanne Quiroz at 926-1949 or 0917 242-6000, or visit www.communicationandhistory.com.

RC, Jose Mari perform in JVP Christmas concert

The music Volunteers of the Philippines and top acts including Filipinos present a special Christmas concert on Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. at the RDO Francisco Santiago Hall, RDO Tower 2, Makati ave., Makati City. Performers include Jose Mari Chan, Randy Gloriaga, Pepe Bonoyore, Drew Thalia, Ricapel and ABA, with RC Concepcion as a special guest. Call 420-1900 or 891-9999.

After Aida'

Music Artist presents After Aida," Reunion on the Isle of Giuseppe Verdi, on Dec. 1 and 2, 8 p.m. at the RDO Francisco Santiago Hall, Makati City. Jaime and Micaela Alcaraz, Paul Holden, Steven Tampo and Ruel Gungoma. Call 895-8888.

John Prats in 'Marion'

"Dance Floor Dynamite," John Prats' first dance album, has rendered his show his career, repositioning him as a dancing star. And John is similarly upbeat about another weekend here—the start of March, his new signature. Expect from from the box.

PRATS. Her come out with his first dance album.

The fragrance company has come up with more than 50 varieties of imported perfumes. John sees no enthusiasm about concocting his own scent that he can designed the bottle. Motion is available at SM, Robinsons and other malls.

Sale at Starmall

Take advantage of the probably sale at Starmall Edsa, Las Piñas and Shaw-opolis Star Al- along today and tomorrow. Finds: Superstore

FEATURE 2

ROCK AND ROLL PA, MGA TSONG! ASTIG KAYO.
ARTIST OF THE YEAR
BAMBOO
ALBUM OF THE YEAR
"Moonlane Gardens" by ORANGE AND LEMONS
SONG OF THE YEAR
"Will You Ever Learn" by TYPECAST
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SATURDAY Special

Piolo and Sam evince growth in latest albums

By Rito P. Asilo

THERE WAS NO EXCEPTION OVER THE GENerative releases of the latest albums of two of the country's most prominent—and controversial—heartthrobs, Dyke Sherrell's "Timeless" and Sam Milby's "A Little Too Perfect."

Pascual is celebrating his 11th year in the business—a milestone for someone who started getting good notices in Jose Javier Reyes' "Bantang PE."

But, anyhow, wasn't really headed to Piolo on a silver platter. In fact, way before he landed a supporting role in the Xian Lim-Pauleen Luna starrer, he also played forgettable roles in films like Carlo Caparas' "Victoria Mananzan 2, The Untold Story."

The release of Milby's latest album is likewise significant for the 10-Am artist—who found stardom after his stint inside the "Pinoy Big Brother" house—because it's been a year since the release of his last full-length collection. Happily, both albums also demonstrate significant growth for the two teen singers.

Sensibility

In "One More Chance," the first track in Pascual's "Timeless," for instance, Piolo displays confident control of his vocal facility when he slides and glides from the second minute to the chorus. It helps that he's also able to utilize his mood(s) as an actor to convey the tune's emotional nuances. As he prepares for the crowd-pleasing ending, he shifts from throaty belting to smooth crooning with admirable ease.

After four hit albums, Piolo has obviously learned some good tricks about musical ...even his low vocal register sounds fuller now. Of course, hearing a performer sing live is another story.) Another proof of artistic growth is the presence of less Isidro Diaz-arrange, self-penned tracks. "Why Can't We Be Together" and "Show Me Me," which are easy on the ears.

Another top pick is his acutely pleasant duet with Toni Gonzaga, "If Only Love," a song written by Willy Wilson, composer of "Sinddenly, It's Magic." Gonzaga's pure, breathy vocal quality complements Pascual's smooth baritone (Toni may not be a belter, but she's among very few local recording talents who have a knack for choosing songs that suit their idiosyncratic singing styles and vocal affectations).

Pia Arcillas' heartfelt cover by the lush "Magic," a sweeping, melody-rich throwback to the unabashed romanticism of George Canseco and Willy Cruz's timeless love songs! In our book, this tune is one of the most beautiful Tagalog songs we've heard this year! Other songs with chart-topping potential include "Tatarin Mo Man" and "Bakit Pa Ba," which is reminiscent of Wency Cornejo's "Hanggang."

Quibble

Our minor quibble involves the inclusion of Jim Brickman's "To Know You Say You Love Me," which was recently covered by Lea Salonga in her "Inspired" album. To be fair, Piolo's version isn't bad, but compared to Asiongo's bell-like voice, the head'lbrah is simply overboard!

Like Piolo's 13-track album, Sam's debut collection, "A Little Too Perfect," which also contains 13 songs, boasts of self-written (some) and Jim Brickman compositions: "Shining Star" and "Love of My Life." He too shows some growth as a singer—though his vocal quality limits his ability to sing songs from R&B or musical genres.

The opening track, written by a Swedish composer, is a robust finger-snapper that takes full advantage of Sam's full, rock-styled voice. The quasi-gospel number "Love of My Life," is showcased in a fresh arrangement, which the singer interprets in his characteristic signor "hollowing." To effect...the song has an inconvincing and reflective quality.

Sam's style is more confidently utilized in the new-rock arrangements of "Where Did You Go?" and "I Won't Miss This Chance," which are among the album's hit-bound tunes. Fortunately, most tracks here are chosen to suit the singer's round eye and style.

Brickman's "Shining Star" turns out to be a rousing number, with rubberband beats and a radio-friendly arrangement. The soulful "Can't Help Falling in Love" gets a soulful remodeling.

Other highlights: "Hinahol Ito Ako" and "It's You All Along." Unfortunately, Milby has yet to rid himself of his less-than-endearing vocal affectations, which are characterized by his hair-raising growls.

Happily, pumped up tunes like the bumpy "It's You All Along" don't disappoint.

Yet all of Milby's roguish exuberance and show-powered feeling, however, raw diving is certainly Sam's voice is more suited for slow, soft tender than ballads.

MILBY. Displays songs that suit his vocal type and style.

WELCOME. Sings "Magic," one of the most beautiful compositions this year.

A GREAT PURPOSE. TOO.
The Coca-Cola Company
Pamilyang protektado, less worries!
NEW!
EIGHT O'CLOCK
Immuno Active
ORANGE
Enjoy delicious Eight O' Clock araw-araw!
The new Eight O'Clock ImmunoActive is the only one with Selenium, which helps promote a strong immune system. Para protektado at mas enjoy ang buong pamilya.

Jackson Five set to reunite for performance tour

LONDON—THE Jackson Five, the group that launched the career of pop superstar Michael Jackson, are planning to reunite for a tour as early as next year, Jermaine Jackson told BBC radio recently.

Jermaine Jackson—who appeared on the British reality television show "Celebrity Big Brother," earlier that year—said that Michael would take part, and several dates had already been discussed.

One more time

"Michael will be involved," he told the broadcaster. "He had not time to do it on our last tour. We were in on the knee." Jackie, Tito, Jermaine, Marlon and Michael last toured together in 1984 as The Jacksons—with six members, along with Randy Jackson having originally formed the Jackson Five in 1964.

The group stopped touring together as Michael and sister Janet Jackson became international music superstars, and the Jackson Five formally disbanded in 1990.

Michael was acquitted of charges of child abuse two years ago, and Jermaine confirmed that the trial had delayed the reunion project.

Trial

"There's been so much going on, getting over the hurdles that we all faced during Michael's trial," explained Jermaine, who employed vocals on the group until Michael took over.

"But, we are stronger than ever. I'm going to say thank you so much to fans and supporters of my family in Europe, and all over the UK, especially for their love and support."

He added that the group were "in the studio at the moment," hinting at new material. AFP

JACKSON FIVE: Young Michael is fourth from left.

Dancing penguins waltz away with Bafta win

LONDON—THE DANCING penguins of "Happy Feet" have beaten Harry Potter to win the Best Film Award at the year's children's Bafta, the junior version of the annual film and television awards in the United Kingdom.

The computer-animated movie, featuring the voices of Nicole Kidman, Elijah Wood and Robin Williams, announced the boy wizard's latest adventure, "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," The penguins were also up against the cutest contender, "Flushed Away," and the fantasy adventure, "Bridge to Terabithia."

Box-office hit

"Happy Feet," a box-office hit made by Warner Bros. Pictures and Australia's Village Roadshow, was the first Australian feature movie early this year.

Potter also lost out in the video game category. That prize went to "Guitar Hero: World Tour," a music game in which players compete to build a fictional empire in be crowned king of the music.

Other winners included the BBC children's channel, Cbeebies (TV channel of the year), cartoon character "SpongeBob SquarePants" (international) and "In the Night Garden," the Ragdoll production featuring lipsplodge. Reuters

HUMBLE (voiced by Elijah Wood) was "Happy Feet's" rambunctious protagonist.

Disparate elements dramatically converge in 'Lions for Lambs'

MEDFORD, STREEP AND CRUISE: Superstar in ensemble performances.

By Hesse U. Tore

"LIONS FOR LAMBS," ROBERT Redford's hand-holding film on the Middle East conflict, utilizes a novel approach in clarifying its many issues.

In essence Ring Roberts is provided by the cerebral dissection of a political science professor, played by director Redford, who has been urging his best students to get involved in current affairs, instead of standing off to many young America can have done.

Exceptional student

The professor starts off by trying to motivate an exceptional student to get his act together, but the brilliant but indolent youth counters that the countrys leaders have failed to inspire him to do his share.

His maxim: from injustice that this isn't a matter of reacting to good example, but acting on one's own convictions. To illustrate this, the film flashes back to two of the teacher's best students—who felt so engaged that they volunteered for military service in the Middle East.

Prospects

At first would have it, however, the two brave soldiers prospect are negatively affected by a known-staff senator Chris Cramer and his cookered glasses field email and tragically vulnerable units to fight in some "safer" parts of Afghanistan. See all the engaged courage in the world can save their small lives from being overwhelmed by the enemy.

Another point of view is represented by a veteran journalist (Meryl Streep) who sees the kind flaw in the influential society's plan, and tries hard to make him see the error of his ways.

But, her encounter by pointing out that some used to people not gently to blame for "selling" the war to the American public, and the disinterested journalist puts her job at risk by refusing to participate in the dissemination of the senator's latest schemes.

Separate elements

These separate elements strangely converge when the professor's former students are engaged after their mission goes awry. All of a sudden, the issues involved come to be abstract material by a debate, but become a matter of life and death.

We, only two soldiers' lives are at stake, but they serve as a microcosm for the larger war itself, with its mounting list of casualties.

Director Redford's pleasures are such tender to make for film. Isn't episodic, so it's sometimes difficult to keep track of the protagonists' respective motivations. Script is by Oscar-nominated screenwriter Matthew Michael Carnahan (Redford's "Lions for Lambs" is the academy to the country, to the teachers).

At time, however, the movie's dramatic pitch congeal—with greatest power and facility, since its different components have been previously detailed.

Yes, the effect comes anyway, but they compromise for the fascination with their ability to focus on and clarify the various issues that prompted Redford to make this film.

Legitimate concern

Basically, "Lions for Lambs" was the war against terror is a legitimate concern, but powerless to have been cured by some politicos and military leaders in Washington that true objective purpose—with the vast complexity of many media individuals and organizations.

Objectives

While makes this situation appalling is the fact that it has used patriotic American troops as cannon fodder in the armies, senior of disinterested or misguided combat strategies and objectives. If I haven't agree with Redford, "Lions for Lambs" could make them, in criticism, less willing to add to the toll of casualties.

This laudable potential consequence wouldn't have been enhanced without the superlative ensemble performances secured in by Streep, Redford, Cruise and the movie's other principal and secondary players. They provide the human face to this movie needs to be truly compelling and memorable.

Christmas wishes do come true

Lou-Lou said. "Thank you!" she added, holding back her tears.

"I'm sure we'll get along well," smiled Paolo. "By the way did you make a wish after swallowing the Amburg fairly?"

"Yes, I did. And it did come true ... it's you," Lou-Lou shyly shared.

"Wow! How did that happen?," asked Paolo.

"I'm sure here in the city and I don't know anyone. My Christmas wish was to have a friend. And then you, Paolo ... you've been my friend!"

"I'm very happy to hear that," Paolo replied, his eyes beaming even.

"This will not only be my first Christmas gift, but also my best birthday gift—tomorrow," Lou-Lou revealed.

"Christmas Day is your birthday? Happy birthday, Lou-Lou! You must be very happy sharing your birthday with Jesus," Paolo exclaimed.

"Thank you, Paolo. Actually, my real name is Belen and I'm really happy to have the same birthday as He. And it is even more special, now that I have a friend!" Lou-Lou hugged Paolo.

The two girls parted ways with smiles on their faces and they looked forward to more happy days together to friends.

That night, as Paolo's room prepared their exotic bacon, they heard a loud knock on the door.

"Who could that be?," asked Paolo's mom as she walked to the door.

"Merry Christmas!," a very familiar and dearly beloved voice rang out.

"Yay! Dad!," shouted Paolo as she jumped to hug and kiss her father.

Paolo couldn't contain her happiness, now that her family was complete that Christmas. She was happy that her mother's special wish had come true! After eating their sumptuous feast, her mom handed Peter a gift.

"Merry Christmas, son," smiled her mom.

Paolo's heart beat fast as she unwrapped her present.

"Bad shoes! Oh, thank you!," Paolo grinned as she hugged her parents.

It was truly a merry Christmas for Paolo and her family. And, as she went to bed, she said her deepest prayer of thanks—for, indeed, Christmas wishes do come true!

Oprah stays on top of her game

NO ONE BOSS CHRISTMAS SETTER: Glam Oprah Winfrey. From the dividend-stuffed set to the gift-giving extravaganza, the undisputed leader of daytime television reigns on top of her game with a holiday show that continues to make history every year.

For nearly a decade now, Oprah has tailored the festive season by playing Tenochtitlán's Santa in monopolizing audience members. Legions of viewers around the globe watch in awe as the talk show host doles out millions' worth of giveaways in Oprah's Favorite Things—the segment that rules in the show's best ratings.

'Pay It Forward'

In 2005, Oprah opted to do things differently by surprising everyone with the "Pay It Forward" challenge, her "favorite giveaway ever." In lieu of the usual presents, each member of the audience received $1000 worth of gift cards to be spent on a charitable cause.

"I can honestly say that every gift I've ever given has brought at least as much happiness to me as it has to the person I've given it to. That's the feeling I want to pass on to you," Oprah passionately shares.

But, Oprah's Favorite Things is just one of the many highlights in what has been a historic 20-year run for the top-rated talk program. Since its syndication in 1986, The Oprah Winfrey Show has never been unseated as the number one talk show for 19 consecutive seasons.

Winning streak

Upon receiving her Emmy Lifetime Achievement in 1998, Oprah decided to permanently remove herself and the show for reminiscing, ending her winning streak with a record of 10 Emmys.

Having cemented its reputation in global television history, "The Oprah Winfrey Show" has genuinely welcomed more than 45k celebrities on stage: Julia Roberts tops the list among the most frequent female celebrity guests—with 30 appearances—while the late Rikli reigns, Gaffer Vaccines, had been on the show 71 times!

But, it's not all glamour and fun at "The Box Jeez crowned Oprah by donating $1 million—the highest amount ever donated on "Oprah," in support of Hurricane Ease, in relief efforts!

'Oprah Effect'

When Oprah speaks, the rest follows. The 'Oprah Effect,' has also helped various enterprises and artists to successfully take off. Appeal based library Doc's cookery were said to have propelled to 12,000 after being featured in the show's 'Big Ideas that Made Millions!' episode.

The Oprah Book Club, which started with Jacqueline Mitchard's "The Deep End of the Ocean," has brought 38 other featured books to the top of the best-sellers list. And singer James Blunt hit a career high on the Billboard 200 after an "Oprah" guest appearance. In short: gone unnoticed since then.

Wondering what else Oprah will come up with? Viewers on this area catch "The Oprah Winfrey Show" on the Hallmark Channel during the following time slots: from Monday to Friday, 1 p.m. (daytime); Monday to Wednesday, 10 p.m. (primetime); and Sundays, 8 p.m. (primetime/special).

WINFREY: Has ushered in the festive season by playing Tenochtitlán's Santa to unsuspecting audiences members.

Oprah Winfrey Show," as its host sought to use television to make a difference, due to investor an socially relevant issues, coupled with her gift of gab, helped herself globalize diverse causes in the areas of education, children and women.

In 1997, an episode airing her campaign to encourage viewers to collect spare change for scholars and to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity paved the way for the creation of a public charity known as Oprah's Angel Network, which has now raised more than $50 million. Bedsides her

YULETIDE STORY FOR YOUNG READERS

Christmas wishes do come true

By Sharon Rolan-Pisuncio

DING, DONG! DING, DONG! Ding, Dong!

The church bells rang loudly as throngs of people trooped to the San Juan Bautista Parish for the traditional Simbang Gabi.

Paola was eager to attend the dawn masses with her mother (she was fascinated with the festive mood of the surroundings – the colorful banners and lights on the church's facade). Christmas carols being sung, lovingly and jazz bursting stalls lined up along the churchyard, and the cool breeze associated with the season.

Paola didn't mind waking up at dawn—and vowed not to fall asleep during the service.

"Mom, don't forget to buy my favorite bibingka after the mass," Paola reminded her mother as they made their way to a pew.

"I won't, my dear," her mom replied.

Excited

Paola was excited to attend the Simbang Gabi because her mom told her that anyone who completed the nine dawn masses would have his wish granted.

This thrilled Paola as she had one special wish. She knelt down to pray, closed her eyes and whispered: "Dear God, please make my wish come true. I wish to have a pair of red shoes this Christmas!"

During the mass, Paola joined the whole congregation in singing joyous hymns. She was very active during the service.

Suddenly, she noticed a young girl about her age sitting across the aisle. She sat quietly at the far end of the pew. She was fair-skinned, had long, black hair and wore a faded blue dress.

"What could her wish be?" Paola thought to herself.

After the mass, Paola and her mom went to buy some hot and yummy bibingka at one of the stalls. That became their routine every morning after attending Simbang Gabi.

"I wonder what your wish is," kiddish Paola's mom when they reached home.

"I can't tell you mom. It's supposed to be a secret," Paola grinned.

But her mom knew how much Paola loved the red shoes that one distinguishes of their extra in the mall. Paola knew it would suit the dress her mom had sewn for her for Christmas.

The following morning, Paola saw the girl again, sitting quietly in a corner, her hair tied back in a ponytail with a plastic ribbon.

Try

"Is she wishing for a toy?," Paola wondered.

At home, Paola was busy making Christmas cards for her cousins and friends. She made cards in different sizes using the paper her mom had bought her. She used her crayons to color them.

"Mom, will God really grant all my wishes?," Paola inquired while she arranged the cards she had already finished.

"He will, if you believe in Him," her mom declared. "I hope God's granting your wish is not the only reason you're attending the Simbang Gabi masses every morning, Paola," added her mom, quizzically.

"Oh no, Mom. Of course it would be wonderful if my wish would come true—but, more than that, I love Simbang Gabi! I love the smell of bibingka, the Christmas carols, and I like guessing people's wishes just by looking at them," Paola said proudly.

"You what?" chuckled her mother.

"Well, I'm sure most of the churchgoers are excited about getting their wishes granted after attending nine days of Simbang Gabi. For example, there's the man whose hair is starting to thin. I'm sure he's asking God to give him thicker hair! Then, there's this old lady who always sits next to us who seems to have difficulty speaking because she has no teeth. I bet she's asking God to make her some," Paola narrated to her mother laughed out loud.

"And there's this boy who sings very, very loud—but out of tune! He's probably wishing he had a beautiful voice. God can do that, can't he?," Paola continued, not minding her mom's continuous laughter.

"And, there's another boy who makes funny faces at everyone in church. He probably wants to become a clown in children's parties, and wishes that he'll grow up soon to fulfill his dream!"

"You've seen all these during Mass?," her mom exclaimed. "Oh, Paola," she sighed.

Mother and daughter laughed endlessly as Paola related more stories about the people she saw inside the church. Then, she shared in a sad tone.

"But there is this girl whose wish I find difficult to guess."

"What do you mean, difficult? I'm sure you know what most kids love to have," her mother smiled.

"But, she's different . . . I thought she might be wishing for a toy…but, there's something else," Paola sighed.

The next morning, Paola was expecting to see the girl seated in her corner again. She wanted to see if she would be able to guess what the girl's Christmas wish could be.

"There she is… hmm…does she want a doll? A dress?" Paola talked herself. But, she was quite sure that, whatever it was, the girl must be eager for that wish to come true.

Hall

One day, Paola and her mom visited the mall. Paola saw the red shoes again, and she couldn't take her eyes off them. Her mother saw how Paola gazed at the shoes but she just smiled and pretended she didn't notice.

"Mom, do you also have a Christmas wish?," asked Paola while she and her mother sat at the mall's play area.

"Of course I do. Can you guess what it is?" teased her mother.

"Hmmm, let me think," replied Paola as she stared at her mom. "You wish for food to be with us on Christmas?"

"Well, yes. But are both house that he still has one more week to finish his work abroad before he can come home to spend Christmas with us," her mother replied with sadness in her eyes.

"Mm, now I know! You want to buy me an ice cream cone today because you know I love ice cream!," said Paola, giggling as she ran toward the food court followed by her mother's laugh heartily.

On the last day of Simbang Gabi, Paola was very excited. In fact, she couldn't sleep well the night before because of so much anticipation.

Crowd

As in the previous days, the crowd gathered in the church had grown in number. There were even some who settled themselves outside with their own chairs in tow.

Inside, all of the pews were full of people. Paola and her mom had a hard time passing through the crowd and it took them sometime to be able to find a comfortable spot inside. When they finally did, Paola knelt and fervently said her "prayer wish" for the last time.

Before the mass started, Paola looked around and saw the shy girl standing at the far end of the aisle, something told her to make the girl sit beside her.

"Come here! Hurry!," Paola whispered as she waved to the girl.

"What is it, Paola? The mass is about to start," her mother scolded her.

"The girl, mom, she's here. I'll ask her to sit beside me," said Paola.

The girl didn't move from where she stood. But, when Paola looked at her again and signaled for her to come, she quietly walked toward Paola's side.

"Hi," whispered Paola as she moved closer to her mom to make room for the girl. "I'm Paola. I always see you here during Simbang Gabi."

Bell

The girl stared at Paola, dumbfounded. Before she could say a word, the bell rang to signal the start of the celebration. Paola simply just beamed out as the girl stood beside her.

When the time to sing the Lord's Prayer came, Paola held the girl's hand as they sang together.

Before the mass ended, Fr. Carlos reminded everyone: "Do note most if not all of you are excited to find out if your wish will come true, now that Simbang Gabi is over. Remember always that, with faith in God, nothing is impossible. May the true spirit of Christmas fill your hearts with joy!"

Choir

The crowd applauded as the choir sang "Joy to the World."

"What is your name?," Paola asked the girl as they left the church.

"My name is Lea Lou," the girl said.

"Do you like bibingka? I have it my mom and I will buy some. Do you want to join us?," invited Paola as she noticed that Lea-Lea did not have anyone with her.

"Sure. Actually, my mother sells bibingka outside the church," replied Lea-Lea.

"Wonderful! That's great! I'll tell mom to buy bibingka there," said Paola.

It turned out that the bibingka stall they frequented belonged to Lea-Lea's cousin. Paola found out Lea-Lea's family came from the province and were here to celebrate Christmas away from her hometown.

"You'll love it here in the city," shared Paola, as she and Lea-Lea sat on a bench while eating bibingka. "We can be friends."

"Really?," a very surprised

SATURDAY Special

'Idol' Jordin Sparks utilizes youthful charm in debut album

NEW YORK—WHEN TEEN music stars approach the age of consent, they often test the boundaries of what's appropriate by taking on projects with adult overtones. "American Idol" champ, Jordin Sparks, took the opposite approach as she sought out seasonal fare for CD debut.

"I wasn't sure what I wanted to sing about," Sparks notes, "but I knew what I didn't want to sing about! I wanted to stay away from '60s, put your hands all over me'—type of songs, because I haven't experienced that yet, so the first time I would sing it would be really classic—plus, I don't feel comfortable singing stuff like that." Sparks, who turns 18 this month, said with a giggle.

Striking good looks

It's that kind of wholesome stance—along with her pretty-but-not-too-sexy good looks—that endeared her to "American Idol's" viewers this year, making her the youngest winner in the TV phenomenon's six-season history, after defeating contestant Blake Lewis. And, on her self-titled Jive Records debut, mixed recordings—and Sparks herself—seemed to make sure she remained that sweet-as-pie image.

"She's one of the most grounded people I've ever met on this planet—you immediately get a sense of who she is and her values," praises Jive's Jeff Fenzler, who helped Sparks and her management team select songs for the album.

"You have to make a record that represents who she is. We tried to keep that in mind from the beginning of the process," he explains. "I said to her from the beginning, a big part of my goal was to help her make a record that she would be proud of, and I think she felt that way at the end of the day."

Talent competition

To that end, the "Sweet Sparks" CD is decidedly family-friendly—much like the talent competition that launched her career. Thanks to her "American Idol" success—and her age—Sparks' fan base has a large kid contingent. But this parent-size fan base also includes parents and grandparents who, along with their children, watched as the hit-star took what began a powerful idea and ran to the adult-as-favorite to win the "Idol" crown.

Sparks seemed to make sure that she didn't alienate any age group with the musical she chose. "I never thought of targeting a specific audience," Sparks elaborates. "I'm like the little girl who wouldn't come up to me, but I also like meeting the older women who say they like me! It's really cool," she enthuses. "I merely want to make good music, so hopefully we'll find the right balance of songs that both adults and little kids will enjoy listening to!"

It looks like she has found that balance on "Jordin Sparks," a thoroughly pop CD with a mix of romantic ballads, dance grooves and inspirational anthems. The album's first single, the gutsy-infused "Tattoo," got a slow start on radio, but it has been steadily rising on the Billboard pop charts—and it now is certified top 20 hit.

Contribution

The CD was crafted with the help of pop music's top producers, including Bloodshy & Avant, the team behind Britney Spears' ubiquitous "Toxic/Gimme More." But, Sparks makes it clear that her contribution was more than mere vocals—the collection also includes a songwriting credit in one of the album's 11 tracks.

"I feel lucky because I had a lot of say in

A diary in comics by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

A. LUPIN

BY JOE ABRERA

PUGAD BARDY

BY PH. JUNIOR

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMIC AND WEEDY

BY LYRA GASCILLANO

LOVEBOATS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

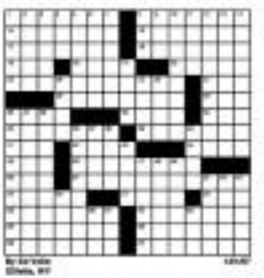
SIDE/MACHINE

BY FRANK ABRERA

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Concepts Sudoku

By Dave Green

			9				8	
		7		8				9
	2		4			6		
5		3						
	6			4			1	
						8		4
		9			3		4	
2				7		3		
	5				1			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Answer to previous puzzle

9	2	4	8	5	3	1	7	6
6	5	3	1	4	7	8	9	2
8	1	7	6	9	2	3	5	4
7	6	2	9	3	5	4	1	8
3	9	1	4	8	6	5	2	7
4	8	5	2	7	1	6	3	9
2	4	6	3	1	9	7	8	5
1	7	9	5	6	4	2	8	3
5	3	8	7	2	8	9	4	1

'Idol' Jordin Sparks utilizes . . .

from page 8

when the album was going to sound like," she chuckles. "I relate to a lot of the songs on it!" There's especially one of our less mature personal songs, "God Loves Ugly," about overcoming insecurity about appearance.

The song may seem like an odd choice for the young beauty, but she says it resonated with the young singer, especially after she endured criticism from the conservative weight watcher for her full figure after she won the "Idol" crown.

It's this levelheadedness that Sparks seems to apply to the whirlwind that has become her life since her "Idol" win this year. She credits her close-knit family with keeping her grounded. Sparks (the daughter of former NFL player, Phillippi Sparks) always has one of her family members by her side, and relies on their guidance when things start to get stressful.

Spotlight

The next few months will be particularly grueling for the young singer, as she promotes her debut album, which also represents the biggest test of her young career. Will she follow the multiplatinum path of "Idol" winners, Carrie Underwood and Kelly Clarkson, or suffer a Taylor Hicks–fate and fade from the spotlight?

Even Sparks admits that the whole thing "is a little scary." But, she thinks her youth has given her an advantage. "That's the point of this career. I'm excited because of my age—I can always grow!"

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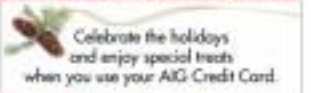


Tintin's story

By Nestor U. Torre

CHRISTINE BESSELA-BABAO TAYAG has friends and fans, a mighty pound of her latest book for young readers, "The Story of Christine." The titular servant, her target readership is a bit older—girls in their adolescence or early teens.

In addition, Tintin's story is more personal, because the problem she tackles she could easily face when she was growing up.

In "The Story of Christine," the young principal female character describes herself as an "ugly duckling" delivered by her schoolmates for not being pretty and of being weird and taller than her peers.

Insecurities

Like many adolescents, Christine is overwhelmed by insecurities and allows given weight to what people think and say about them, even if their comments have little basis in fact.

By being so careful about her insecurities and self-doubts, Christine makes her easy and predictable (hapfl) impatience for adolescence and teens, and provides the key avenue of overlooking the manner young people have in that they're finally brought out in the open and can more easily be addressed and alleviated.

Christine herself shows the way out of the morass of confusing emotions. For once, she stops listening to what others say about her, and focuses instead on what she thinks of herself.

Plus points

She singles out her placemates, instead of her perceived or real flaws—she's actually nice for people. She is good here, a top-notch student and a natural leader, etc.

Healed by this inspired self-education, Christine presents herself as a role model for other young people to focus on their inner riches than their liabilities. Life really isn't as simple as that, but Christine's self-awakening makes it surprising, if not easy.

The one thing a digital modern woman's emphasis on outlook focuses like looks, trendy dressing, acquaintances and "popularity."

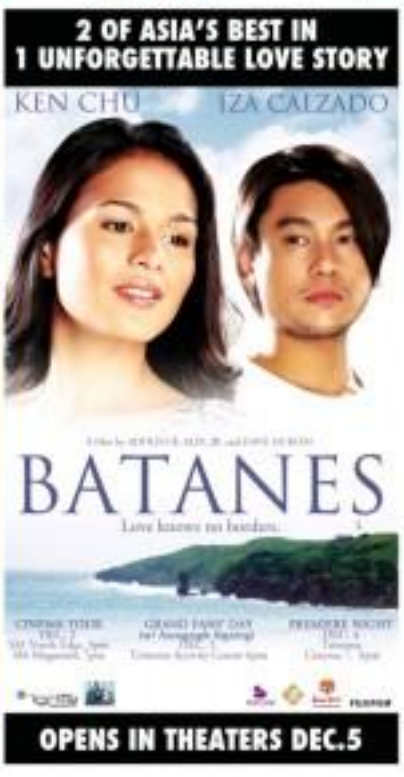
Self-worth

It shows other young people that self-worth is really what it's all about, and the reason story kids into themselves and like what they see, the better for them.

As a grad class Tintin has chosen to focus on the adolescent age group, because there's not to be being written for it on the local scene.

Since this age group is more problematic than others, every little bit is more welcome, and we hope that other writers will also come up with interesting and inspiring stories for tweenies and teens to make go myself in—and learn valuable lessons from!

BESSELA-BABAO (THEN AND NOW). Provides the key service of enthralling the concerned young people here.



SATURDAY Special

Why top comedians make us laugh –or don't

By Nestor U. Torre

MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH IS ONE of the most difficult challenges faced by entertainers, so we doff our hats off to the country's most gifted comedians. It's interesting to note, however, that they use very different techniques to tickle viewers' funnybones.

Take the country's Comedy King, Dolphy. At the height of his popularity he was an amazingly versatile performer, going from slide, razor-thinning gags, street-smart spoofs, "smacked" comedic feature resemblance of lovers, playing the Filipino Everyman on TV—plus, singing and dancing, to boot!

Contemporary events

Viewers also liked his entry to today—riffs on contemporary events, characters and issues, and his longtime partnership with his comic "sidekick," Pinakilala.

By a more personal note, the "funny-lized" comedians turned out to be, quite unexpectedly, a bit torn-the ladies, harboring some 13 children with a number of them, some of whom he married.

These days, however, Dolphy has loosened his focus, both in terms of romantic order and careers, as his current performances are only a pale shadow of his comedic range and movie heyday. Yet to the '80s. Pilipino all in said and done, however, the Comedy King is a tough act to follow.

Which is not to say that there are only a few contenders for Dolphy's title. Vic Sotto, another comedian who's also with the ladies, plays it more smoke and stilled. Others, less comedic and fun in the movies, only his features a comedy like Manoy in the Movie Manila Film Festival.

Comparisons

For his part, Michael V is younger and more peckish in his spoofing style. He also commits up comparisons to Dolphy due to his wide range of comedic characterizations—a number of them female.

On TV, his comedy shows, "Bubble Gang" and "Bitoy's Funniest Videos," deck with viewers, further adding to his stellar clout.

WHAT'S ALL

EDITG. Has scored direct hits in his stories with his feature-comedy Mel Mercher's.

SM CINEMA

movietime SHOWTIME

Your life as a movie

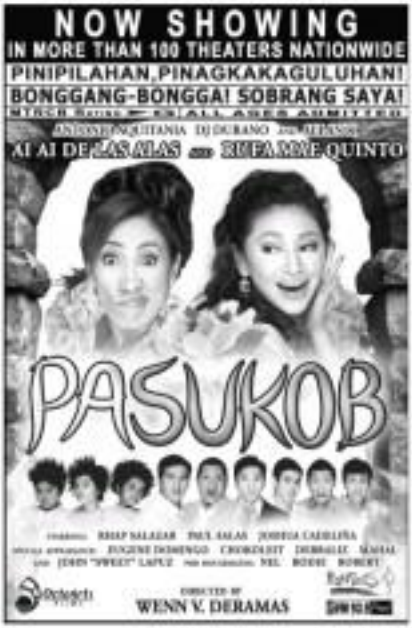
Why top comedians...

from page A1

Michael's "starring partner" Ogie Alcasid, in fact became as a singer-composer but he's also a standout funnyman. His comedic style is more gentle and wistful than Michael's, which makes for nice contrast when teamed together.

Adding to Ogie's outlet as a performer is the fact that he has a sensitive, insightful side, which comes into well in the dramatic portrayals that he very infrequently essays. For instance, the stage-actor was tense for his intense portrayal of the title character in Rommy Gallardo's musical, "Tano Ka Ba, Juan Ritol?"

Master impressionist Willie Revillame is a is a class all his own. His darkly insightful impersonation of a veritable rogues' gallery of Filipinos is one to unforgettable, because they represent not just their looks, voices and idiosyncrasies, but also their souls—or lack thereof!



The eye as diagnostic tool

CAN THE EYE BE A WINDOW TO THE stomach? Or the bones? Yes, say iridology persons.

Some friends visited two iridologists, who gave diagnoses of their conditions by simply looking at their eyes—or specifically their irises. The iridologists pointed out physical problems only the patients knew about.

Problem

Here are our friends' observations: "The iridologist told me I had liver problem, and he asked me to get an ultrasound, which revealed a cyst!" He asked, 'Do you have a problem with your right ovary?' And sure enough, my right ovary had been operated on for blockage of blood flow by a cyst!"

Another friend related how the iridologist asked her to get an abdominal ultrasound, and another one for the reproductive organs. The result showed a cyst in the right ovary.

Furthermore, he inquired if she had injured her left knee or hip—and he was right! His friend had had a hip injury one month earlier! Then, he was told his body was laden with toxins—which a subsequent laboratory test confirmed!

Indeed, our eyes are not only for seeing, they're also used to reflect other health-related conditions. Moreover, iridology is quick and noninvasive. Why don't you try it?

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

Why top comedians...

From page K1

A lot of research, exhaustive and good judgment is needed to come up with such authentic gems, so we hope that more people realize that we have a veritable national treasury of pop "edutainment" in Willie Nep.

On the other hand, many younger comedians are men still because they are too lazy to do the work involved, and just wing it with slapstick or sarcastic "humor"...and read up with (canned) egg on their faces.

Or else, they're one more performer who keep doing their limited and predictable routines for years, until they end up as tacky caricatures of themselves.

It's time for them to take their cue from our genuine masters of comedy and pay their dues, if they want to be tomorrow's stars of comedy. Otherwise, the laughs on them!

GIANT BEARS IN "THE GOLDEN COMPASS"

MORE REALISTIC THAN "KING KONG"!

The giant polar bears in "THE GOLDEN COMPASS" are incredibly lifelike. More convincing and more realistic than the giant ape created by Peter Jackson for the movie "King Kong".

Both films used the same state-of-the-art CGI technology to bring giant animals to life.

But according to director **Chris Weitz**, it was more difficult to create the giant bears because unlike "King Kong", the giant bears in THE GOLDEN COMPASS are highly intelligent. They can talk and show emotions. They are fierce warriors fighting with special skills and there are hard to capture on screen.

The fight scene between **Iorek Byrnison**, the good bear and **Iofur Raknison** (the evil bear, is one the most spectacular many p mans battles you will ever see on the big screen.

Aside from the giant bears, the film features superior special effects more spectacular than "**The Lord of the Rings**" - a film which **NEW LINE CINEMA** also produced a few years back.

Years before the film started production Weitz visited director Peter Jackson's **WETA STUDIO**. After consulting with Jackson, he realized it was impossible to bring the book to the movie screen. Weitz announced his resignation as director of THE GOLDEN COMPASS, citing the enormous technical and financial challenges of the epic. The film would need more than **$200M** to produce and the services of several special effects houses around the world in order to bring Pullman's novel to the silver screen. New Line Cinema's initial budget was $150M and will use only one FX Company for the entire film.

When New Line Cinema was able to raise an additional $60M from foreign distributors and added 3 special effects houses to do the impossible, Weitz returned to the director's chair.

THE GOLDEN COMPASS opens in theaters on December 5.

IS THE FILM ANTI-RELIGION?

"Not anti-religion but anti-oppression and anti-authoritarian. It's opposed to the use of theocracy for political gain".

– Award-winning author **Philip Pullman** ("The Golden Compass") from the talk at the Oxford Literary Festival in 2007

"Pullman's portrayal of the "Church" in his book amounts to an attack on dogmatism and the use of religion to oppress, not on CHRISTIANITY itself. I proposed that THE GOLDEN COMPASS be taught as part of religious education in schools."

– His Eminence the **Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Rowan Williams**

"The Golden Compass is not an atheistic work but a highly spiritual and reverent piece of writing. Those who attack it as an assault upon religion are mistaken"

– The Golden Compass director **Chris Weitz** interviewed by British SFX magazine

"The basic essence of the film believes in faith and all the original Christian ideas of love and charity. It's a film against oppression. And there's nothing wrong with that. I don't want the movie apologizing."

– **Daniel Craig** interviewed at 2007 Toronto Film Festival

"I was raised Catholic, the Catholic Church is part of my essence. I wouldn't be able to do this film if I thought it were at all anti-Catholic."

– **Nicole Kidman** to an Entertainment Weekly interview

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William Holden's Fil-Am wife chose love over career

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vince vaughn paul giamatti
FRED CLAUS

By Bebs Cervantes

LONG BEFORE BARBARA PEREZ ventured with Jeffrey Hunter in "No Man Is An Island," a Hollywood film shot in the Philippines, a Filipina had already made it in Hollywood: Brenda Marshall, a mestizaperipin actress considered a classic beauty by Hollywood's beauty experts, was born Aida Ambrosio in Negros in 1915. It is said that her mother was Filipina, although her official biography doesn't admit it.

She started opposite the swashbuckling Errol Flynn in "The Sea Hawk" (1940), then she played important roles in "Footsteps in the Dark," "Pants after Dark" and "The Constant Nymph." She seemed destined for Hollywood success.

Stardom

However, in 1941, she married screenwriter William Holden, who had achieved stardom when he starred opposite Bette Davis. Barbara Stanwyck, in Clifford Odet's "The Golden Boy." Upon her marriage to Holden, Aida—as she preferred to be called—practically "retired," and appeared only occasionally in forgettable films.

Holden, on the other hand, went on to become a major movie star. He bagged six Best Actor Oscar nominations (and he won for his performance in "Stalag 17"), and was one of the top box office actors of the '50s. He would make over 70 films in his lifetime, including Billy Wilder's "Sunset Boulevard" and "Sabrina." He married bravely in exotic locals in Africa and became very wealthy. Holden and Marshall divorced in 1971.

Holden was one of Hollywood's great off-screen lovers. He reportedly maintained simultaneous romance with actress Kelly and Audrey Hepburn. In the late '50s, he also figured in a lengthy environmental affair with Female actress, Capucine. Years later, Hepburn confessed her love for the handsome actor, but she never considered marrying him because of his alcoholism. He was a ladies' man, indeed!

Box-office triumphs

While Aida disappeared from the Hollywood scene, Holden continued to appear in box office triumphs like "Love is a Many Splendored Thing" (with Jennifer Jones), "The World of Suzie Wong" (with Nancy Kwan), "Picnic" and "Born Yesterday."

In the '60s, Holden starred in films like "The Wild Bunch" and "The Towering Inferno," but by then, alcohol abuse had already taken its toll on his good looks and talents like plentiful.

On June 16, 1981, while heavily intoxicated, he slipped on a rug and slipped, suffered a severe gash on his head, and bled to death. Aida succumbed to lung cancer on July 10, 1992.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 BECKHAM	2 THE KINGDOM	3 PASSION	4 ONE MORE CHANCE
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 HITMAN	3? THE KINGDOM	
	4 THE HAMMERMAN	5 FRED CLAUS	6 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	7 ONE MORE CHANCE
GREENBELT 1	1 PASSION		2 THE KINGDOM	
GREENBELT 2	1? MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM		2? THE KINGDOM	
	3 THE HAMMERMAN	4 FRED CLAUS	5 ENCHANTED	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1? THE KINGDOM		2 FRED CLAUS	
	3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	4 PASSION	5 ENCHANTED	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE KINGDOM	2? MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	3 ENCHANTED	4 HITMAN / LOVE FOR LAMBA
MARKET! MARKET!	1 PASSION		2 FRED CLAUS	
	3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	4 THE KINGDOM	5 ONE MORE CHANCE	
TRINOMA	1 PASSION	2 ONE MORE CHANCE	3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM	4 FRED CLAUS
	5 HITMAN	6 ENCHANTED	7? THE KINGDOM	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

gloriette — DOUBLE MIDNIGHT MADNESS SALE, November 30 to December 2

GREENBELT — Holiday Opera Concert, December 4, 6pm, The Gallery, 2nd Flr. Greenbelt 5

ALABANG TOWN CENTER — Christmas Caroling Series, Featuring Parish of St. James The Great, December 1, 4pm, Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU — FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase, December 1 to 31

MARKET! MARKET! — HOME SALE, November 16 to December 2, 3rd Level, Home Market!

Greenbelt — Repertory Philippines presents PIGSKIN ON THE ROOF, November 9 - December 16, 2007, For inquiries, ph. call 687-6738, or visit www.repertory-philippines.com

Ayala MUSEUM — MUSA: THE MUSEUM by Jomel Almaz, November 8th - January 13, 2008, Second Floor Gallery, For more info, ph. call 757-7117 to 23 loc., Or e-mail museum_musa@yahoo.com.ph

Tri Noma — SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL, This Can Is the Title Line Whole, December 1 and 2, 11:30am, 3pm and 6pm, Trinoma Activity Center; Rhythm Academy - Ballet Conception with the Augustinian Ladies, December 8, 6pm, Activity Center

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MALING ANALA
LOVE FOR LAMBA
PAINGKILA
TAMBOLISTA
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SATURDAY Special

DIAMOND AND KENNEDY SCHLOSSBERG. Her pitches were his inspiration.

Origins of hit songs revealed

LOS ANGELES—YOU MUST have read the recent stories about Neil Diamond finally disclosing who many decades that the inspiration for one of his biggest hit songs, "Sweet Caroline," was really a photo of a very young Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg.

Innocent

The Associated Press quoted the singer-songwriter as saying: "My inspiration for the song was the picture of a little girl dressed in the winter to her riding gear, sitter to her pony. It was such a wonderful little innocent picture—I immediately felt down was a song in there!"

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Roberto V. Arguelles

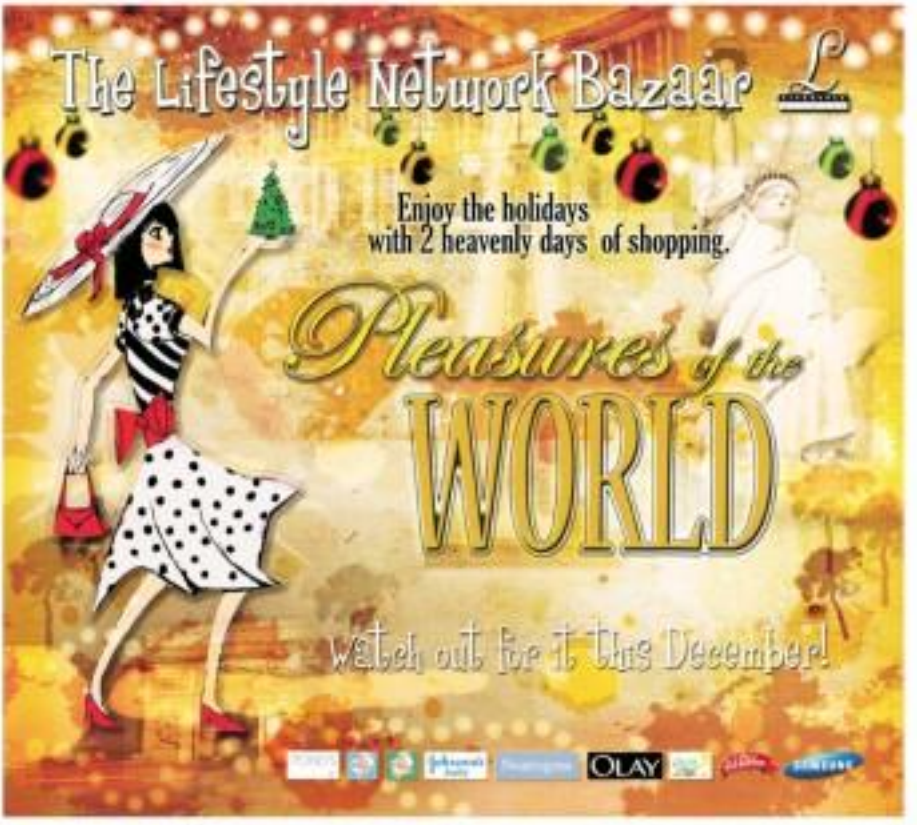
Franchise Tomaselli's daughter was only a little girl when Diamond was still a "young songwriter, who was broke." It took the singer a long time to get the chance to personally tell Caroline how she had inspired him to compose "the most important song" of his career. The moments finally came when Neil sang the song to Caroline on catcalls—on her 18th birthday!

News stories

Recent news stories also came out to reveal the stories behind other popular songs: Don McLean ("American Pie") also "found" in front Elvis "Killing Me Softly With His Song" was about him.

Bloomberg News' Patrick Gale reported that the haunting Sarmalad song, penned by Charles Fox and Norman Gimbel, was spanked by a poem that inspired Lee Garbenman to compose after watching McLean in a concert—although it was Roberta Flack's version of Lieberson's song that became a huge hit.

Even idea had controversy sources of inspiration for his scholarly songs: For some historians, the lyrics of "Suzanne Fee" don't make sense, but do you know that the song is a tribute to the late Buddy Holly, one of the pioneers of rock 'n' roll?



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Origins of hit songs revealed

Cole further revealed "Somewhere Fair" is about the glorious 1960s and the drab 1980s. It talks about Feb. 2, 1959—"the day the music died"—when a plane crash claimed the lives of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson.

Artifacts

Many people know that Dickey other popular song, "Vincent," is the singer's paean to painter Vincent Van Gogh. Cole disclosed that the song is still played regularly at the Van Gogh Museum in the Netherlands—and its "silent sounds has been learned with some of the painter's artifacts."

When we came to LA in the mid-1960s and saw Mr. Arthur Fiedler for the first time, we couldn't believe that the conductor's place—often overseas by drug addicts and people selling fake goose eggs—was the very path that inspired Jimmy Webb to compose the timeless pop ditty made popular by the late actor Richard Harris.

In better condition

The park was in better condition in the '60s. Webb told the LA Times' Geoff Boucher: "In mid-1968, I was headed with my girlfriend—who ... ended up crossing the street in an insurance company—at the time—Hancock Park was where we met for lunch, fed the ducks and rode pedalboats."

Jimmy, whose songs were talked about a cake being left out in the rain and that, "he'll never have that recipe again" left together were, "Oh, no!"), explained: "Those lyrics were very real to me—there was nothing psychedelic about 'Bend.' I really saw cakes at birthday parties held at the park. But, people reacted strongly to the song and to lyrics...there's been a lot of intellectualization!"

Aspirations

Jimmy shared that he originally wrote "Wichita Park" for the 1960s band, the Association (which turned it down)—he even had pop-symphony aspirations for the song!

However, the composer was surprised that Rutland Heights—who's known as the youngest generation in the original Professor Dumbledore in the "Harry Potter" film franchise—took a liking to the song.

The actor's instinct was right, and "Wichita Park" became the career single of the actor-singer's pop debut album! Other singers like Frank Sinatra and Bonny Guitman have since recorded their own versions.

Jimmy once described the song as "a lump on my back I wish I had spent more time working on the song. But, who knew it was going to be the crazy hit song? I'm very glad it wasn't my last song!" Well, who's complaining? To this day, "Wichita Park" remains as popular as ever!

Incident

How strangely, when Webb learned the girl he dated in Hancock Park, the incident inspired him to write another song: "By the Time I Get to Phoenix."

We're happy to report that, after decades of neglect, the park has been renovated recently. Now, kids are celebrating their birthdays there again—but this time around, let's hope that no one leaves a cake out in the rain, lest we have our late song again: "Oh, no!"

• • •

ORIGINALLY

MIMZEL. Starred in the stage versions of "Rent" and "Wicked."

NOW SHOWING

Hoffman, Portman impart wisdom in unconventional children's tale

HOFFMAN and Portman are dazzled by the magical treats in their 11-year-old toy store.

By Rito F Asis

"Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium"

D: Zach Helm

S: *Dustin Hoffman, Natalie Portman and Jason Bateman*

ZACH HELM'S DIRECTORIAL DEBUT IS not one for cynics. For viewers not familiar with the works of Marc Forster ("Finding Neverland"), Spike Jonze and Charlie Kaufman ("Being John Malkovich"), this "oh cringe" movie may not amount to much.

But, if there are vestiges of their childhood's untainted faith and wide-eyed optimism left in their souls, there it's not hard to get drawn to the magical world of 243-year-old Edward Magorium (played by Dustin Hoffman), proprietor of the 114-year-old magic toy store, Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium.

When the eternally smiling toy impresario announces his "departure," Molly Mahoney (Natalie Portman), the 23-year-old loyal apprentice to whom Mr. Magorium bequeaths the store's ownership, doesn't take the news lightly.

Molly is a former child musical prodigy who has yet to fulfill her full artistic potential. Problem is, she's lost her spark! In fact, she's convinced that if she can't evoke magic to the Rachmaninoff scores that she used to play so brilliantly as a child, there's no way she can effectively run Mr. Magorium's place by herself—especially now that, as accountant Henry Pearson (Jason Bateman) confirms, the toy shop is on the verge of financial ruin!

As Molly struggles to find her long-lost "sparkle," she teams up with Henry and the toy store's eccentric 9-year-old patron, Eric (Zach Mills), to help get the store back on its feet—before it's too late!

Considering the film's ridiculously whimsical tone, technical polish and the spellbinding visual tricks diverse Helm conjures up on the big screen, the production may seem too glossy-produced and someone to cringe an adult viewer's interest. For much younger audiences, however, watching the film can be a riveting experience—a primer suite to a child's rousing optimism, sense of adventure and magical wanderlust.

On paper, a more showy performer like Jim Carrey or Robin Williams could probably give the titular character the relentless screwy and off-the-wall quirk he requires, but Hoffman's restrictly low-key but relishing characterization arguably outlives—a testament to the veteran actor's thespic wisdom.

On the other hand, Portman, who's an beautifully youthful as ever, takes her role too seriously, making her character less empathetic than she should be. Fortunately, little participation brings up the film's energy level and he lends his precocious charm and refreshing presence to the occasionally-fragmented narrative proceedings.

Helm, who wrote "Will Smith's swan-song, the cocktail metaphysical comedy, "Hitcher Than Fiction," crafts a well-meaning film that dares to defy the cinematic medium's conventional storytelling norms—and, happily, it succeeds in spurts.

The movie generates more true-voltage buzz than beauty, wonder thrills. But, it doesn't fail to remind viewers that, oftentimes, life is what we make it. As Mr. Magorium tells Molly: "Your life is an occasion—rise to it! It just requires a dash of magic!"

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Origins of hit songs revealed

Amy Adams coaxes Idina Menzel to sing 'Defying Gravity'

ADAMS. Plays a princess in "Enchanted."

IN OUR RECENT interview with Amy Adams, the actress revealed one of the perks she got from acting in the Disney movie, "Enchanted". She successfully convinced Broadway star Idina Menzel, in sing the popular show tune, "Defying Gravity" from the phenomenal stage musical, "Wicked"—just for her.

Menzel, who won a Tony for her performance as Elphaba in Stephen Schwartz's "Wicked," costars with Adams in "Enchanted" as the girlfriend of Patrick Dempsey's character. Amy recounted: "I called Idina to get her to sing 'Defying Gravity' for me and I succeeded (laughing)! Much to Idina's chagrin, I'm addicted to 'Wicked'!"

Composer

The Oscar-nominated actress also admitted that, lately, she's been "turning into the songs from 'Wicked.'" Schwartz, the stage musical's composer, collaborated with Alan Menken to write songs for his/her movie.

Prior to fame of "Wicked," the composer told us in a separate interview that the stage musical's much-anticipated film version will probably be released in six years.

E-mail columnist 3305@yahoo.com, and read his blog, "The Napoles Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/napoles-post.